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POEMS  
by  
NATHANIEL COTTON, M.D.  
WITH THE AUTHOR'S LIFE.



*G. Nicholson Junr. sculp.*

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## THE LIFE OF COTTON.

Of the family, birth-place, and education of Nathaniel Cotton, there are no written memorials. A collection of his *Various Pieces in Prose and Verse*, was printed in 1791; but by an unpardonable neglect in the editor, without any information concerning his life, family, connections, or even the times and places of his birth and death. For the sake of posterity, as well as the present times, it is to be wished that those who are acquainted with any particulars concerning him, would communicate them to some repository, where they might be reserved for the use of future biographers.

A few detached dates and notices, collected chiefly from his writings, form the slender memorials of his life.

He was bred to the profession of physic, in which he took the degree of Doctor; but whether he was indebted to either of the English Universities for any part of the literature he possessed, or his academical degree, is uncertain.

He settled as a physician at St. Albans, in Hertfordshire, where he acquired great reputation in his profession, and continued to reside there till his death. In the latter part of his life, he kept a house for the reception of lunatics.

In 1749, he had the affliction to lose his wife; as appears from his letter to Dr. Doddridge, dated St. Albans, April 29, 1749, published by the Rev. Mr. Sedman among the "Letters to and from Philip Doddridge. D. D." 8vo, 1790.

In 1751, he published his *Visions in Verse, for the Entertainment*

and *Instruction of Younger Minds*, 8vo, without his name; nor is it prefixed to any of the subsequent editions, in conformity with the modest ambition he professes in the following lines of his *Epistle to the Reader*.

All my ambition is, I own,  
to profit and to please unknown.

This publication was favourably received by the polite and religious world, and probably obtained him the friendship of Young, who resided at Welwyn in the neighbourhood of St. Albans.

He attended Young in his last illness, April 1765. Among the *Extracts from his Letters*, is an account of the last moments of that excellent poet, without superscription or date.

The following *Extract* exhibit an advantageous specimen of his temper and disposition, and an interesting picture of the infirmities of age.

“My bed is often strewed with thorns: but I must journey through life on the same terms that many wiser and better men than I have done; and must reflect with some degree of comfort that I am making hasty advances to that sanctuary where the “wicked cease from troubling, and the weary shall be at rest.” Oh! my heart strings, break not yet, out of pity to the worthier part of my family, who cannot lose me without suffering the greatest inconveniences.

“I have passed almost three winters beyond the usual boundary appropriated to human life; and having thus transcended the longevity of a septuagenarian, I now labour under the inconveniences and evils of advanced years. I am emaciated to a very great degree, and my trembling limbs are so weak, as to feel insufficient to support my weight. The languors, likewise, which I suffer





are so frequent and severe, as to threaten an entire stop to the circulation, and are sometimes accompanied with that most distressful of all sensations, an anxiety *circa præcordia*. I sleep so little during the night, that, in general, I can rise up at the voice of the bird, be that period ever so early. Nor are my mental powers less deficient than my bodily strength; for my memory is notoriously impaired; and a subject which requires a little thought, becomes a burden hardly supportable. Are not all the particulars which I have communicated, proofs of their being the *concluding* page of Shakespeare's "strange eventful history?" Yes, surely, my dear friend, when an inspired author announces the same truth. Nor are you and I to wonder, that in our passage through this world, the weather and the ways grow the worse the longer we travel and the nearer we approach to our journey's end. The sacred writer just now mentioned affirms, that when those comfortless days arrive, which are attended with satiety, disgust, and inquietude, we must expect the clouds to be often turning after the rain. Amid these melancholy scenes, it hath lately pleased Divine Providence to bereave me of one of the best of daughters, who never gave me a moment's uneasiness, but at her death, and in that illness which led to it; I mean my daughter Kitty. *Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus in chari capitis?* But no more of this awful occurrence."

He died at St. Albans, in an advanced age, August 2, 1788. Of his *Visions in Verse*, the seventh edition, revised and enlarged, was printed in 1767. The subsequent editions are so numerous to be specified. In 1791, his *Various Pieces in Prose and Verse*, many of which were never

before published, were printed in 2 vols. 8vo. The first volume contains his *Visions in Verse, Fables*, and other poetical pieces. The second, his prose pieces, *Mirza to Selim; Mirza to Hehertolla; Muculus's Letters; five Sermons; Health, an Allegory; on Husbandry; on Zeal; Detraction, a Vision; on Marriage; History of an Innkeeper in Normandy; on the XIIIth Psalm; on the XLIId Psalm; Extracts from Letters*. They are "inscribed, by permission, to the Dowager Countess Spencer," by Nathaniel Cotton, probably his son.

His moral and intellectual character appears to have been, in the highest degree, amiable and respectable. His piety is truly venerable and edifying. His writings are distinguished by the strongest marks of piety, learning, taste, and benevolence. They are the productions of an enlightened mind, fraught with the purest principles of morality and religion. They are characterized by an elegant simplicity, derived from a diligent study of the best classical models.

As a poet, his compositions are distinguished by a refined elegance of sentiment and a correspondent simplicity of expression. He writes with ease and correctness, frequently with elevation and spirit. His thoughts are always just and religiously pure, and his lines are commonly smooth and easy; but the rhymes are not always sufficiently correspondent. As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffused over his compositions: under his direction, poetry may be truly said to be subservient to religious and moral instruction. Every reader will regard with veneration the writer, who condescended to lay aside the scholar and the philosopher, to compose moral apologues, and little poems of devotion "for the entertainment and instruction of young



minds." His *Visions*, the most popular of his productions, are not inferior to the best compositions of that kind in the English language. They are written in the measure of Gay's "Fables," and, like them, each apologue is introduced with solemn reflections which naturally lead to the story; but in forcibleness of moral and poetical spirit, they are unquestionably superior to these popular compositions. With the utility of sentiment, they combine the beauties of personification and allegory, and the elegancies of the higher poetry.

From the Life of Cotton prefixed to his Works in Dr. Robert Anderson's "Complete Edition of the Poets of Great Britain."







VISIONS IN VERSE,  
 for the  
 ENTERTAINMENT AND INSTRUCTION OF  
 YOUNGER MINDS.

*Virginibus puerisque canto.* Hor.

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AN EPISTLE TO THE READER.

Authors, you know, of greatest fame,  
 through modesty suppress their name;  
 and would you wish me to reveal  
 what these superior wits conceal?  
 Forego the search, my curious friend,  
 and husband time to better end.  
 All my ambition is, I own,  
 to profit and to please, unknown;  
 like streams supply'd from springs below,  
 which scatter blessings as they flow.

Were you diseas'd, or press'd with pain,  
 strait you'd apply to Warwick-lane;\*  
 the thoughtful doctor feels your pulse,  
 (no matter whether Mead or Hulse)  
 writes—Arabic to you and me,—  
 then signs his hand, and takes his fee.  
 Now should the sage omit his name,  
 would not the cure remain the same?

\* College of Physicians.

not but physicians sign their bill,  
or when they cure, or when they kill.

'T is often known the mental race  
their fond ambitious sires disgrace.  
Dar'd I avow a parent's claim,  
critics might sneer and friends might blame.  
This dang'rous secret let me hide,  
I'll tell you every thing beside.  
Not that it boots the world a tittle,  
whether the author's big or little;  
or whether fair, or black, or brown;  
no writer's hue concerns the town.

I pass the silent rural hour,  
no slave to wealth, no tool to power,  
my mansion's warm and very neat;  
you'd say, a pretty snug retreat.  
My rooms no costly paintings grace,  
the humbler print supplies their place.  
Behind the house my garden lies,  
and opens to the southern skies:  
the distant hills gay prospects yield,  
and plenty smiles in every field.

The faithful mastiff is my guard,  
the feather'd tribes adorn my yard.

My cow rewards me all she can  
(brutes leave ingratitude to man);  
she, daily thankful to her lord,  
crowns with nectareous sweets my board.  
Am I diseas'd?—the cure is known,  
her sweeter juices mend my own.

I love my house, and seldom roam,  
few visits please me more than home.  
I pity that unhappy wretch  
who loves all company but self,





by idle passions borne away  
to op'ra, masquerade, or play;  
fond of those hives where Folly reigns,  
and Britain's peers receive her chains;  
where the pert virgin slights a name,  
and scorns to redden into shame.  
But know, my fair (to whom belong  
the poet and his artless song)  
when female cheeks refuse to glow,  
farewel to virtue here below.

Our sex is lost to every rule,  
our sole distinction, knave or fool.  
'Tis to your innocence we run;  
save us, ye fair, or we're undone;  
maintain your modesty and station,  
so women shall preserve the nation.

Mothers, 't is said, in days of old  
esteem'd their girls more choice than gold:  
too well a daughter's worth they knew,  
to make her cheap by public view:  
(few, who their diamonds's value weigh,  
expose those diamonds every day)  
then, if Sir Plume drew near and smil'd,  
the parent trembled for her child:  
the first advance alarm'd her breast;  
and fancy pictur'd all the rest.  
But now no mother fears a foe,  
no daughter shudders at a beau.

Pleasure is all the reigning theme,  
our noonday thought, our midnight dream.  
In folly's chace our youths engage,  
and shameless crowds of tott'ring age.  
The die, the dance, th' intemp'rate bowl  
with various charms engross the soul.



Are gold, fame, health, the terms of vice  
the frantic tribes shall pay the price.  
But tho' to ruin post they run,  
they'll think it hard to be undone.

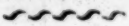
Do not arraign my want of taste,  
or sight to ken where joys are plac'd.  
They widely err, who think me blind,  
and I disclaim a stoic's mind.  
Like your's are my sensations quite;  
I only strive to feel aright.  
My joys, like streams, glide gently by,  
tho' small their channel, never dry;  
keep a still, even, fruitful wave,  
and bless the neighb'ring meads they lave.

My fortune (for I'll mention all,  
and more than you dare tell) is small;  
yet every friend partakes my store,  
and want goes smiling from my door.  
Will forty shillings warm the breast  
of worth or industry distress'd?  
This sum I cheerfully impart;  
't is fourscore pleasures to my heart.  
And you may make, by means like these,  
five talents ten, whene'er you please.  
'T is true, my little purse grows light;  
but then I sleep so sweet at night!  
This grand specific will prevail,  
when all the doctor's opiates fail.

You ask, what party I pursue?  
Perhaps you mean, 'Whose fool are you?'  
'The names of party I detest,  
badges of slavery at best!  
I've too much grace to play the knave,  
and too much pride to turn a slave.

I love my country from my soul,  
and grieve when knaves or fools controul.  
I'm pleas'd when vice and folly smart,  
or at the gibbet or the cart:  
yet always pity, where I can,  
abhor the guilt, but mourn the man.

Now the religion of your poet—  
does not this little preface shew it?  
my visions if you scan with care,  
't is ten to one you'll find it there.  
And if my actions suit my song,  
you can't in conscience think me wrong.



## SLANDER.

Inscribed to Miss \*\*\*\*.

My lovely girl, I write for you;  
and pray believe my visions true;  
they'll form your mind to every grace;  
they'll add new beauties to your face:  
and when old age impairs your prime,  
you'll triumph o'er the spoils of time.

Childhood and youth engage my pen,  
't is labour lost to talk to men.  
Youth may, perhaps, reform, when wrong,  
age will not listen to my song.  
He who at fifty is a fool,  
is far too stubborn grown for school.

What is that vice which still prevails,  
when almost every passion fails;  
which with our very dawn begun,  
nor ends, but with our setting sun;  
which like a noxious weed, can spoil  
the fairest flowers, and choke the soil?

'Tis Slander,—and, with shame I own,  
the vice of human kind alone.

Be Slander then my leading dream,  
tho' you're a stranger to the theme;  
thy softer breast and honest heart,  
scorn the defamatory art;  
thy soul asserts her native skies,  
nor asks detraction's wings to rise;  
in foreign spoils let others shine,  
intrinsic excellence is thine.

The bird, in peacock's plumes who shone,  
could plead no merit of her own:  
the silly theft betray'd her pride,  
and spoke her poverty beside.

Th' insidious sland'ring thief is worse  
than the poor rogue who steals your purse.  
Say, he purloins your glitt'ring store;  
who takes your gold, takes 'trash'—no more;  
perhaps he pilfers—to be fed—  
ah! guiltless wretch, who steals for bread!  
but the dark villian, who shall aim  
to blast, my fair, thy spotless name,  
he'd steal a precious gem away,  
steal what both Indies can't repay!  
Here the strong pleas of want are vain,  
or the more impious pleas of gain.  
No sinking family to save!  
no gold to glut th' insatiate knave!

Improve the hint of Shakespeare's tongue,  
't was thus immortal Shakespeare \* sung.  
And trust the bard's unerring rule,  
for nature was that poet's school.

\* Othello.

As I was nodding in my chair,  
 I saw a rueful wild appear:  
 no verdure met my aching sight,  
 but hemlock, and cold aconite;  
 two very pois'nous plants, 't is true,  
 but not so bad as vice to you.

The dreary prospect spread around!  
 deep snow had whiten'd all the ground!  
 a black and barren mountain nigh,  
 expos'd to every friendless sky!  
 Here foul-mouth'd Slander lay reclin'd,  
 her snaky tresses hiss'd behind:  
 "A bloated toad-stool rais'd her head,  
 the plumes of ravens were her bed:" \*  
 she fed upon the viper's brood,  
 and slak'd her impious thirst with blood.

The rising sun and western ray  
 were witness to her distant sway.  
 The tyrant claim'd a mightier host  
 than the proud Persian e'er could boast.  
 No conquest grac'd Darius' son †;  
 by his own numbers half undone!  
 Success attended Slander's power,  
 she reap'd fresh laurels every hour.  
 Her troops a deeper scarlet wore  
 than ever armies knew before.

No plea diverts the furies rage,  
 the fury spares nor sex nor age.  
 E'en merit, with destructive charms,

\* Garth's Dispensary.

† Xerxes, king of Persia, and son of Darius. He invaded Greece with an army consisting of more than a million of men (some say more than two millions), who, together with their cattle, perished in a great measure through the inability of the countries to supply such a vast host with provisions.

provokes the vengeance of her arms.

Whene'er the tyrant sounds to war,  
her canker'd trump is heard afar.  
Pride, with a heart unknown to yield,  
commands in chief, and guides the field.  
He stalks with vast gigantic stride,  
and scatters fear and ruin wide.  
So th' impetuous torrents sweep  
at once whole nations to the deep.

Revenge, that base Hesperian,\* known  
a chief support of Slander's throne,  
amidst the bloody crowd is seen,  
and treach'ry brooding in his mien;  
the monster often chang'd his gait,  
but march'd resolv'd and fix'd as fate.  
Thus fell the kite whom hunger stings,  
now slowly moves his outstretch'd wings;  
now swift as lightning bears away,  
and darts upon his trembling prey.

Envy commands a secret band,  
with sword and poison in her hand.  
Around her haggard eye-balls roll;  
a thousand fiends possess her soul.  
The artful, unsuspected spright  
with fatal aim attacks by night.  
Her troops advance with silent tread,  
and stab the hero in his bed;  
or shoot the wing'd malignant lie,  
and female honours pine and die.  
So prowling wolves, when darkness reigns,  
intent on murder, scour the plains;

\* Hesperia includes Italy as well as Spain, and the inhabitants of both are remarkable for their revengeful disposition.



approach the folds, where lambs repose,  
whose guiltless breasts suspect no foes ;  
the savage gluts his fierce desires,  
and bleating innocence expires.

Slander smil'd horribly, to view  
how wide her daily conquests grew :  
around the crowded levees wait,  
like oriental slaves of state :  
of either sex whole armies press'd,  
but chiefly of the fair and best.

Is it a breach of friendship's law  
to say what female friends I saw ?  
Slander assumes the idol's part,  
and claims the tribute of the heart.  
The best, in some unguarded hour,  
have bow'd the knee, and own'd her power.  
Then let the poet not reveal,  
what candour wishes to conceal.

If I beheld some faulty fair,  
much worse delinquents crowded there :  
prelates in sacred lawn I saw,  
grave physic, and loquacious law ;  
courtiers, like summer flies, abound ;  
and hungry poets swarm around.  
But now my partial story ends,  
and makes my females full amends.

If Albion's isle such dreams fulfil,  
't is Albion's isle which cures these ills ;  
fertile of every worth and grace,  
which warm the heart and flush the face.

Fancy disclos'd a smiling train  
of British nymphs that tripp'd the plain :  
Good-nature first, a sylvan queen,  
attir'd in robes of cheerful green :

a fair and smiling virgin she!  
 with every charm that shines in thee.  
 Prudence assum'd the chief command,  
 and bore a mirrour in her hand;  
 gray was the matron's head by age,  
 her mind by long experience sage;  
 of every distant ill afraid,  
 and anxious for the simp'ring maid.  
 The graces danc'd before the fair;  
 and white-rob'd Innocence was there.  
 The trees with golden fruits were crown'd,  
 and rising flowers adorn'd the ground;  
 the sun display'd each brighter ray;  
 and shone in all the pride of day.

When Slander sicken'd at the sight,  
 and skulk'd away to shun the light.



### PLEASURE.

Hear, ye fair mothers of our isle,  
 nor scorn your poet's homely style.  
 What tho' my thoughts be quaint or new,  
 I'll warrant that my doctrine's true:  
 or if my sentiments be old,  
 remember truth is sterling gold.

You judge it of important weight,  
 to keep your rising offspring strait:  
 for this such anxious moments feel,  
 and ask the friendly aids of steel:  
 for this import the distant cane,  
 or slay the monarch of the main.  
 And shall the soul be warp'd aside  
 by passion, prejudice, and pride?



Deformity of heart I call  
the worst deformity of all.  
Your cares to body are confin'd,  
few fear obliquity of mind.  
Why not adorn the better part?  
this is a nobler theme for art.  
For what is form, or what is face,  
but the soul's index, or its case?

Now take a simile at hand,  
compare the mental soil to land,  
shall fields be till'd with annual care,  
and minds lie fallow every year?  
O since the crop depends on you,  
give them the culture which is due:  
hoe every weed, and dress the soil,  
so harvest shall repay your toil.

If human minds resemble trees,  
(as every moralist agrees)  
prune all the stragglers of your vine,  
then shall the purple clusters shine.  
The gard'ner knows, that fruitful life  
demands his salutary knife:  
for every wild luxuriant shoot,  
or robs the bloom, or starves the fruit.

A satirist \* in Roman times,  
when Rome, like Britain, groan'd with crimes,  
asserts it for a sacred truth,  
that pleasures are the bane of youth:  
that sorrows such pursuits attend,  
or such pursuits in sorrows end:  
that all the wild advent'rer gains  
are perils, penitence, and pains.

\* Persius.

Approve, ye fair, the Roman page,  
 and bid your sons revere the sage ;  
 in study spend their midnight oil,  
 and string their nerves by manly toil.  
 Thus shall they grow, like Temple, wise,  
 thus future Lockes and Newtons rise.  
 Yes, bid your sons betimes forego  
 those treach'rous paths where pleasures grow;  
 where the young mind is folly's slave,  
 where every virtue finds a grave.

Let each bright character be nam'd,  
 for wisdom or for valour fam'd :  
 are the dear youths to science prone ?  
 tell, how th' immortal Bacon shone !  
 who, leaving meaner joys to kings,  
 soar'd high on contemplation's wings ;  
 rang'd the fair fields of nature o'er,  
 where never mortal trod before :  
 Bacon ! whose vast capacious plan  
 bespoke him angel more than man !

One summer's evening as I stray'd  
 along the silent moon-light glade,  
 with these reflections in my breast,  
 beneath an oak I sunk to rest ;  
 a gentle slumber intervenes,  
 and fancy dress'd instructive scenes.

Methought a spacious road I spy'd,  
 and stately trees adorn'd its side ;  
 frequented by a giddy crowd  
 of thoughtless mortals, vain and loud ;  
 who tripp'd with jocund heel along,  
 and bade me join their smiling throng.

I strait obey'd—persuasion hung  
 like honey on the speaker's tongue.



A cloudless sun improv'd the day,  
and pinks and roses strew'd our way.

Now as our journey we pursue,  
a beauteous fabric rose to view,  
a stately dome, and sweetly grac'd  
with every ornament of taste.

This structure was a female's claim,  
and Pleasure was the monarch's name.

The hall we enter'd uncontroll'd,  
and saw the queen enthron'd on gold;  
Arabian sweets perfum'd the ground,  
and laughing Cupids flutter'd round;  
a flowing vest adorn'd the fair,  
and flowery chaplets wreath'd her hair:  
fraud taught the queen a thousand wiles,  
a thousand soft insidious smiles;  
love taught her lisping tongue to speak,  
and form'd the dimple in her cheek;  
the lily and the damask rose,  
the tincture of her face compose;  
nor did the god of wit disdain  
to mingle with the shining train.

Her votries flock from various parts,  
and chiefly youth resign'd their hearts;  
the old in sparing numbers press'd,  
but awkward devotees at best.

Now let us range at large, we cry'd,  
through all the garden's boasted pride.  
Here jasmines spread the silver flower,  
to deck the wall, or weave the bower;  
the woodbines mix in am'rous play,  
and breathe their fragrant lives away.  
Here rising myrtles form a shade,  
there roses blush, and scent the glade,



the orange, with a vernal face,  
wears every rich autumnal grace;  
while the young blossoms here unfold,  
there shines the fruit like pendant gold.  
Citrons their balmy sweets exhale,  
and triumph in the distant gale.

Now fountains, murm'ring to the song,  
roll their translucent streams along.

Through all the aromatic groves,  
the faithful turtles coo their loves.

The lark ascending pours his notes,  
and linnets swell their rapt'rous throats.

Pleasure, imperial fair! how gay  
thy empire, and how wide thy sway!  
Enchanting queen! how soft thy reign!  
how man, fond man! implores thy chain!  
Yet thine each meretricious art,  
that weakens, and corrupts the heart.

The childish toys and wanton page  
which sink and prostitute the stage!

The masquerade, that just offence  
to virtue, and reproach to sense!

The midnight dance, the mantling bowl,  
and all that dissipate the soul;

all that to ruin man combine,  
yes, specious harlot, all are thine!

Whence sprung the accursed lust of play,  
which beggars thousands in a day?

speak, sorc'ress, speak, (for thou canst tell)  
who call'd the treach'rous card from hell?

Now man profanes his reas'ning powers,  
profanes sweet friendship's sacred hours;  
abandon'd to inglorious ends,  
and faithless to himself and friends;

—♦—♦—♦—  
a dupe to every artful knave,  
to every abject wish a slave ;  
but who against himself combines,  
abets his enemy's designs.  
When Rapine meditates a blow,  
he shares the guilt who aids the foe.  
Is man a thief who steals my pelf ?  
how great his theft who robs himself !  
Is man, who gulls his friend, a cheat ?  
how heinous then is self-deceit !  
Is murder justly deem'd a crime ?  
how black his guilt, who murders time !  
Should custom plead, as custom will,  
grand precedents to palliate ill,  
shall modes and forms avail with me,  
when reason disavows the plea ?  
Who games, is felon of his wealth,  
his time, his liberty, his health.  
Virtue forsakes his sordid mind,  
and Honour scorns to stay behind.  
From man when these bright cherubs part,  
ah ! what's the poor deserted heart ?  
a savage wild that shocks the sight,  
or chaos, and impervious night !  
Each gen'rous principle destroy'd,  
and demons crowd the frightful void !

Shall Siam's elephant supply  
the baneful desolating die ?  
against the honest sylvan's will,  
you taught his ivory tusk to kill.  
Heaven, fond its favours to dispense,  
gave him that weapon for defence.  
That weapon, for his guard design'd,  
you render'd fatal to mankind.

He plann'd no death for thoughtless youth,  
you gave the venom to his tooth.  
Blush, tyrant, blush, for oh ! 't is true  
that no fell serpent bites like you.

The guests were order'd to depart,  
reluctance sat on every heart :  
a porter shew'd a different door,  
not the fair portal known before !  
The gates, methought, were open'd wide,  
the crowds descended in a tide.  
But oh ! ye heavens, what vast surprise  
struck the advent'ers' frightened eyes !  
a barren heath before us lay,  
and gath'ring clouds obscur'd the day ;  
the darkness rose in smoky spires ;  
the lightnings flash'd their livid fires :  
loud peals of thunder rent the air,  
while vengeance chill'd our hearts with fear.

Five ruthless tyrants sway'd the plain,  
and triumph'd o'er the mangled slain.  
Here sat Distaste, with sickly mien,  
and more than half-devour'd with spleen :  
there stood Remorse, with thought oppress'd,  
and vipers feeding on his breast :  
then Want, dejected, pale, and thin,  
with bones just starting through his skin ;  
a ghastly fiend !—and close behind  
disease, his aching head reclin'd !  
his everlasting thirst confess'd  
the fires which rag'd within his breast :  
Death clos'd the train ! the hideous form  
smil'd, unrelenting, in the storm :  
when strait a doleful shriek was heard ;  
I 'woke.—The vision disappear'd.

Let not the inexperience'd boy  
deny that pleasures will destroy ;  
or say that dreams are vain and wild,  
like fairy tales, to please a child.  
Important hints the wise may reap  
from sallies of the soul in sleep.  
And, since there's meaning in my dream,  
the moral merits your esteem.

## HEALTH.

Attend my visions, thoughtless youths,  
ere long you'll think them weighty truths ;  
prudent it were to think so now ;  
ere age has silver'd o'er your brow :  
for he, who at his early years  
has sown in vice, shall reap in tears.  
If folly have possessed his prime,  
disease shall gather strength in time ;  
poison shall rage in every vein,—  
nor penitence dilute the stain :  
and when each hour shall urge his fate,  
thought, like the doctor, comes too late.

The subject of my song is I *Health*,  
a good superior far to wealth.  
Can the young mind distrust its worth ?  
consult the monarchs of the earth :  
imperial czars, and sultans own  
no gem so bright that decks their throne :  
each for this pearl his crown would quit,  
and turn a rustic or a cit.

Mark, tho' the blessing's lost with ease,  
'tis not recover'd when you please.



Say not that gruels shall avail,  
for salutary gruels fail.

Say not, Apollo's sons succeed,  
Apollo's son is Egypt's reed.\*  
How fruitless the physician's skill,  
how vain the penetential pill,  
the marble monuments proclaim,  
the humbler turf confirms the same!  
Prevention is the better cure,  
so says the proverb, and 't is sure.

Would you extend your narrow span,  
and make the most of life you can;  
would you, when med'cines cannot save,  
descend with ease into the grave;  
calmly retire, like ev'ning light,  
and, cheerful, bid the world good-night?  
Let temp'rance constantly preside,  
our best physician, friend, and guide!  
Would you to wisdom make pretence,  
proud to be thought a man of sense?  
let temp'rance (always friend to fame)  
with steady hand direct your aim;  
or, like an archer in the dark,  
your random shaft will miss the mark:  
for they who slight her golden rules,  
in wisdom's volume stand for fools.

But morals, unadorn'd by art,  
are seldom known to reach the heart.  
I'll therefore strive to raise my theme  
with all the scenery of dream.

Soft were my slumbers, sweet my rest,  
such as the infant's on the breast;

\* In allusion to 2 Kings xviii, 21.

when fancy, ever on the wing,  
and fruitful as the genial spring,  
presented, in a blaze of light,  
a new creation to my sight.

A rural landscape I descry'd,  
drest in the robes of summer pride ;  
the herds adorn'd the sloping hills,  
that glitter'd with their tinkling rills ;  
below the fleecy mothers stray'd,  
and round their sportive lambkins play'd.

Nigh to a murm'ring brook I saw  
an humble cottage thatch'd with straw ;  
behind, a garden that supply'd  
all things for use, and none for pride :  
beauty prevail'd through every part,  
but more of nature than of art.

Hail thou sweet, calm, unenvied seat !  
I said, and bless'd the fair retreat :  
here would I pass my remnant days,  
unknown to censure or to praise ;  
forget the world, and be forgot,  
as Pope describes his vestal's lot.

While thus I mus'd, a beauteous maid  
stept from a thicket's neighb'ring shade ;  
not Hampton's gallery can boast,  
nor Hudson paint so fair a toast :  
she claim'd the cottage for her own,  
to Health a cottage is a throne.

The annals say (to prove her worth)  
the graces solemniz'd her birth.  
Garlands of various flowers they wrought,  
the orchard's blushing pride they brought :  
hence in her face the lily speaks,  
and hence the rose which paints her cheeks ;

the cherry gave her lips to glow,  
her eyes were debtors to the sloe ;  
and, to complete the lovely fair,  
't is said, the chesnut stain'd her hair.

The virgin was averse to courts,  
but often seen in rural sports.

Two smiling cherubs grac'd her throne  
(to modern courts, I fear, unknown) :  
one was the nymph that loves the light,  
fair Innocence, array'd in white ;  
with sister Peace in close embrace,  
and heaven all opening in her face.

The reign was long, the empire great,  
and Virtue minister of state.

In other kingdoms every hour,  
you hear of vice preferr'd to power :

Vice was a perfect stranger here :  
no knaves engross'd the royal ear :  
no fools obtain'd this monarch's grace ;  
Virtue dispos'd of every place.

What sickly appetites are ours,  
still varying with the varying hours !  
And tho' from good to bad we range,  
' No matter,' says the fool, ' 't is change.'

Her subjects now express'd apace  
dissatisfaction in their face :  
some view the state with envy's eye,  
some were displeas'd, they knew not why :  
when Faction, ever bold and vain,  
with rigour tax'd their monarch's reign.  
' Thus, should an angel from above,  
fraught with benevolence and love,  
descend to earth, and here impart  
important truths to mend the heart ;

would not th' instructive guest dispense  
with passion, appetite, and sense,  
we should his heavenly lore despise,  
and send him to his former skies.

A dang'rous hostile power arose  
to Health, whose household were her foes:  
a harlot's loose attire she wore,  
and Luxury the name she bore.  
This princess of unbounded sway,  
whom Asia's softer sons obey,  
made war against the queen of Health,  
assisted by the troops of Wealth.

The queen was first to take the field,  
arm'd with her helmet and her shield;  
temper'd with such superior art,  
that both were proof to every dart.  
Two warlike chiefs approach'd the green,  
and wondrous fav'rites with the queen:  
both were of Amazonian race,  
both high in merit, and in place.  
Here Resolution march'd, whose soul  
no fear could shake, no power controul;  
the heroine wore a Roman vest,  
a lion's heart inform'd her breast.  
There Prudence shone, whose bosom wrought  
with all the various plans of thought;  
't was her's to bid the troops engage,  
and teach the battle where to rage.

And now the Siren's armies press,  
their van was headed by Excess:  
the mighty wings that form'd the side,  
commanded by the giant Pride:  
while Sickness, and her sisters Pain  
and Poverty the centre gain:

Repentance, with a brow severe,  
and Death, were station'd in the rear.

Health rang'd her troops with matchless art,  
and acted the defensive part:  
her army posted on a hill,  
plainly bespoke superior skill:  
hence were discover'd through the plain,  
the motions of the hostile train:  
while Prudence, to prevent surprise,  
oft sally'd with her trusty spies;  
explor'd each ambuscade below,  
and reconnoitred well the foe.

Afar when Luxury descry'd  
inferior force by art supply'd,  
the Siren spake—' Let Fraud prevail,  
since all my num'rous hosts must fail;  
henceforth hostilities shall cease,  
I'll send to Health, and offer peace.'  
Strait she dispatch'd, with powers complete,  
Pleasure, her minister, to treat.  
This wicked strumpet topp'd her part,  
and sow'd sedition in the heart!  
'Through every troop the poison ran,  
all were infected to a man.

The wary generals were won  
by Pleasure's wiles, and both undone.

Jove held the troops in high disgrace,  
and bade diseases blast their race;  
look'd on the queen with melting eyes,  
and snatch'd his darling to the skies:  
who still regards those wiser few,  
that dare her dictates to pursue.  
For where her stricter law prevails,  
tho' Passion prompts, or Vice assails;

long shall the cloudless skies behold,  
and their calm sun-set beam with gold.



CONTENT.

Man is deceiv'd by outward show—  
't is a plain homespun truth, I know,  
the fraud prevails at every age,  
so says the school-boy and the sage;  
yet still we hug the dear deceit,  
and still exclaim against the cheat.  
But whence this inconsistent part?  
say, moralists, who know the heart:  
if you 'll this labyrinth pursue,  
I'll go before and find the clue.

I dreamt ('t was on a birth-day night)  
a sumptuous palace rose to sight;  
the builder had, through every part,  
observ'd the chastest rules of art;  
Raphael and Titian had display'd  
all the full force of light and shade:  
around the livery'd servants wait;  
an aged porter kept the gate.

As I was traversing the hall,  
where Brussels' looms adorn'd the wall  
(whose tap'stry shews, without my aid,  
a nun is no such useless maid),  
a graceful person came in view  
(his form, it seems, is known to few);  
his dress was unadorn'd with lace,  
but charms! a thousand in his face.

'This, sir, your property?' I cry'd—  
'master and mansion coincide:

where all, indeed, is truly great,  
and proves that bliss may dwell with state.  
Pray, sir, indulge a stranger's claim,  
and grant the favour of your name.'

'Content,' the lovely form reply'd ;  
'but think not here that I reside :  
here lives a courtier, base and sly ;  
an open, honest rustic, I.  
Our taste and manners disagree,  
his levee boasts no charms for me :  
for titles and the smiles of kings,  
to me are cheap unheeded things.  
(Tis virtue can alone impart  
the patent of a ducal heart :  
unless this herald speaks him great,  
'what shall avail the glare of state?')  
Those secret charms are my delight,  
which shine remote from public sight :  
passions subdu'd, desires at rest—  
and hence his chaplain shares my breast.

There was a time (his grace can tell)  
I knew the Duke exceeding well ;  
knew every secret of his heart ;  
in truth, we never were apart :  
but when the court became his end,  
he turn'd his back upon his friend.

One day I call'd upon his grace,  
just as the duke had got a place :  
I thought (but thought amiss, 't is clear),  
I should be welcome to the peer,  
yes, welcome to a man in power ;  
and so I was—for half an hour.  
But he grew weary of his guest,  
and soon discarded me his breast ;





upbraided me with want of merit,  
but most for poverty of spirit.

You relish not the great man's lot?  
come, hasten to my humbler cot.  
Think me not partial to the great,  
I'm a sworn foe to pride and state;  
no monarchs share my kind embrace,  
there's scarce a monarch knows my face:  
Content shuns courts, and oft'ner dwells  
with modest worth in rural cells;  
there's no complaint, tho' brown the bread,  
or the rude turf sustain the head;  
tho' hard the couch, and coarse the meat,  
still the brown loaf and sleep are sweet.

Far from the city I reside,  
and a thatch'd cottage all my pride.  
True to my heart, I seldom roam,  
because I find my joys at home.  
For foreign visits then begin,  
when the man feels a void within.

But tho' from towns and crowds I fly,  
no humourist nor cynic, I.

Amidst sequester'd shades I prize  
the friendships of the good and wise.

Bid Virtue and her sons attend.

Virtue will tell thee I'm her friend:

tell thee I'm faithful, constant, kind,

and meek and lowly, and resign'd;

will say, there's no distinction known

betwixt her household and my own.

For, ' If these the friendships you pursue,

your friends, I fear, are very few.

So little company, you say,

yet fond of home from day to day?

How do you shun detraction's rod?  
I doubt your neighbours think you odd!

*Content.* 'I commune with myself at night,  
and ask my heart if all be right:  
if 'right,' replies my faithful breast,  
I smile, and close my eyes to rest.'

*Auth.* 'You seem regardless of the town:  
pray, sir, how stand you with the gown?'

*Cont.* 'The clergy say they love me well,  
whether they do, they best can tell:  
they paint me modest, friendly, wise,  
and always praise me to the skies;  
but if conviction's at the heart,  
why not a correspondent part?  
For shall the learned tongue prevail,  
if actions preach a different tale?  
Who'll seek my door or grace my walls,  
when neither dean nor prelate calls?

With those my friendships most obtain,  
who prize their duty more than gain;  
soft flow the hours whene'er we meet,  
and conscious virtue is our treat:  
our harmless breasts no envy know,  
and hence we fear no secret foe;  
our walks ambition ne'er attends,  
and hence we ask no powerful friends;  
we wish the best to church and state,  
but leave the steerage to the great;  
careless, who rises, or who falls,  
and never dream of vacant stalls;  
much less by pride or int'rest drawn,  
sigh for the mitre, and the lawn.

'Observe the secrets of my art,  
I'll fundamental truths impart:



if you'll my kind advice pursue,  
I'll quit my hut, and dwell with you.

The passions are a num'rous crowd,  
imperious, positive, and loud:  
curb these licentious sons of strife;  
hence chiefly rise the storms of life:  
if they grow mutinous, and rave,  
they are thy masters, thou their slave.

Regard the world with cautious eye,  
nor raise your expectation high.  
See that the balanc'd scales be such,  
you neither fear nor hope too much.  
For disappointment's not the thing,  
't is pride and passion point the sting.  
Life is a sea where storms must rise,  
't is Folly talks of cloudless skies:  
he who contracts his swelling sail,  
eludes the fury of the gale.

Be still, nor anxious thoughts employ,  
distrust embitters present joy:  
on God for all events depend;  
you cannot want when God's your friend.  
Weigh well your part, and do your best;  
Leave to your Maker all the rest.  
The hand which form'd thee in the womb,  
guides from the cradle to the tomb.  
Can the fond mother slight her boy;  
can she forget her prattling joy?  
Say then, shall sov'reign love desert  
the humble, and the honest heart?  
Heaven may not grant thee all thy mind;  
yet say not thou that Heaven's unkind.  
God is alike, both good and wise,  
in what he grants, and what denies;

perhaps what goodness gives to-day,  
to-morrow goodness takes away.

You say, that troubles intervene,  
that sorrows darken half the scene.  
True—and this consequence you see,  
the world was ne'er design'd for thee:  
you're like a passenger below,  
that stays, perhaps, a night or so;  
but still his native country lies  
beyond the bound'ries of the skies.

Of Heaven ask virtue, wisdom, health,  
but never let thy prayer be wealth.  
If food be thine (tho' little gold),  
and raiment to repel the cold;  
such as may nature's wants suffice,  
not what from pride and folly rise;  
if soft the motions of thy soul,  
and a calm conscience crowns the whole;  
add but a friend to all this store,  
you can't, in reason, wish for more:  
and if kind Heaven thus comfort brings,  
't is more than Heaven bestows on kings.

He spake—the airy spectre flies,  
and strait the sweet illusion dies.  
The vision, at the early dawn,  
consign'd me to the thoughtful morn;  
to all the cares of waking clay,  
and inconsistent dreams of day.



## HAPPINESS.

Ye ductile youths, whose rising sun  
 hath many circles still to run ;  
 who wisely wish the pilot's chart,  
 to steer through life th' unsteady heart ;  
 and all the thoughtful voyage past,  
 to gain a happy port at last :  
 attend a seer's instructive song,  
 for moral truths to dreams belong.

I saw this wondrous vision soon,  
 long ere my sun had reach'd its noon ;  
 just when the rising beard began  
 to grace my chin, and call me man.

One night, when balmy slumbers shed  
 their peaceful poppies o'er my head,  
 my fancy led me to explore  
 a thousand scenes unknown before.

I saw a plain extended wide,  
 and crowds pour'd in from every side :  
 all seem'd to start a diff'rent game,  
 yet all declar'd their views the same :  
 the chace was Happiness, I found,  
 but all, alas ! enchanted ground.

Indeed I judg'd it wondrous strange,  
 to see the giddy numbers range  
 through roads, which promis'd nought, at best,  
 but sorrow to the human breast.

Methought if bliss was all their view,  
 why did they diff'rent paths pursue ?  
 The waking world has long agreed,  
 that Bagshot's not the road to Tweed :

and he who Berwick seeks through Staines,  
shall have his labour for his pains.

As Parnel \* says, my bosom wrought  
with travail of uncertain thought :  
and as an angel help'd the dean,  
my angel chose to intervene ;  
the dress of each was much the same,  
and Virtue was my seraph's name.  
When thus the angel silence broke,  
(her voice was music as she spoke).

' Attend, O man, nor leave my side,  
and safety shall thy footsteps guide ;  
such truths I'll teach, such secrets show,  
as none but favour'd mortals know.'

She said—and strait we march'd along  
to join Ambition's active throng :  
crowds urg'd on crowds with eager pace,  
and happy he who led the race.

Axes and daggers lay unseen  
in ambuscade along the green ;  
while vapours shed delusive light,  
and bubbles mock'd the distant sight.

We saw a shining mountain rise,  
whose tow'ring summit reach'd the skies :  
the slopes were steep, and form'd of glass,  
painful and hazardous to pass :  
courtiers and statesmen led the way,  
the faithless paths their steps betray ;  
this moment seen aloft to soar,  
the next to fall and rise no more.

'T was here Ambition kept her court,  
a phantom of gigantic port ;

\* The Hermit.

the fav'rite that sustain'd her throne,  
was Falsehood, by her vizard known;  
next stood Mistrust, with frequent sigh,  
disorder'd look, and squinting eye;  
while meagre Envy claim'd a place,  
and Jealousy, with jaundic'd face.

'But where is Happiness?' I cry'd.  
My guardian turn'd, and thus reply'd:

'Mortal, by folly still beguil'd,  
thou hast not yet outstripp'd the child;  
thou, who hast twenty winters seen,  
(I hardly think thee past fifteen)  
to ask if Happiness can dwell  
with every dirty imp of hell!  
Go to the school-boy, he shall preach,  
what twenty winters cannot teach;  
he'll tell thee, from his weekly theme,  
that thy pursuit is all a dream:  
that Bliss ambitious views disowns,  
and, self-dependent, laughs at thrones;  
prefers the shades and lowly seats,  
whither fair Innocence retreats:  
so the coy lily of the vale,  
shuns eminence, and loves the dale.'

I blush'd; and now we cross'd the plain,  
to find the money-getting train;  
those silent, snug, commercial bands,  
with busy looks, and dirty hands.  
Amidst these thoughtful crowds the old  
plac'd all their happiness in gold.  
And surely, if there's bliss below,  
these hoary heads the secret know.

We journey'd with the plodding crew,  
when soon a temple rose to view:





a Gothic pile, with moss o'ergrown;  
strong were the walls, and built with stone.  
Without a thousand mastiffs wait:  
a thousand bolts secure the gate.  
We sought admission long in vain:  
for here all favours sell for gain:  
the greedy porter yields to gold,  
his fee receiv'd, the gates unfold.  
Assembled nations here we found,  
and view'd the cringing herds around,  
who daily sacrific'd to Wealth,  
their honour, conscience, peace, and health.  
I saw no charms that could engage;  
the god appear'd like sordid age,  
with hooked nose, and famish'd jaws,  
but serpents' eyes, and harpies' claws:  
behind stood Fear, that restless spright,  
which haunts the watches of the night;  
and Viper-Care, that stings so deep,  
whose deadly venom murders sleep.

We hasten now to Pleasure's bowers;  
where the gay tribes sat crown'd with flowers  
here Beauty every charm display'd,  
and Love inflam'd the yielding maid:  
delicious wine our taste employs,  
his crimson bowl exalts our joys:  
I felt its gen'rous power, and thought  
the pearl was found, that long I sought.  
Determin'd here to fix my home,  
I bless'd the change, nor wish'd to roam:  
the seraph disapprov'd my stay,  
spread her fair plumes, and wing'd away.

Alas! whene'er we talk of bliss,  
how prone is man to judge amiss!



See a long train of ills conspires  
to scourge our uncontroul'd desires.  
Like summer swarms diseases crowd,  
each bears a crutch, or each a shroud:  
Fever! that thirsty fury, came,  
with unextinguishable flame;  
Consumption, sworn ally to Death!  
crept slowly on with panting breath;  
Gout roar'd, and shew'd his throbbing feet;  
and Dropsy took the drunkard's seat:  
Stone brought his tort'ring racks; and near  
sat Palsy shaking in her chair!

A mangled youth, beneath a shade,  
a melancholy scene display'd:  
his noseless face, and loathsome stains,  
proclaim'd the poison in his veins:  
he rais'd his eyes, he smote his breast,  
he wept aloud, and thus address'd:

‘Forbear the harlot’s false embrace,  
tho’ Lewdness wear an angel’s face.  
Be wise, by my experience taught,  
I die, alas! for want of thought.’

As he who travels Lybia’s plains,  
where the fierce lion lawless reigns,  
is seiz’d with fear and wild dismay,  
when the grim foe obstructs his way:  
my soul was pierc’d with equal fright,  
my tott’ring limbs oppos’d my flight;  
I call’d on Virtue, but in vain,  
her absence quicken’d every pain:  
at length the slighted angel heard,  
the dear refulgent form appear’d.

‘Presumptuous youth,’ she said, and frown’d;  
(my heart-strings flutter’d at the sound)

—♦—♦—♦—  
‘ who turns to me reluctant ears  
shall shed repeated floods of tears.  
These rivers shall for ever last,  
there’s no retracting what is past :  
nor think avenging ills to shun ;  
play a false card, and you’re undone.

‘ Of Pleasure’s gilded baits beware,  
nor tempt the Syren’s fatal snare :  
forego this curs’d detested place,  
abhor the strumpet and her race :  
had you those softer paths pursu’d,  
perdition, stripling, had ensu’d :  
yes, fly—you stand upon its brink ;  
to-morrow is too late to think.

‘ Indeed, unwelcome truths I tell,  
but mark my sacred lesson well :  
with me whoever lives at strife,  
loses his better friend for life ;  
with me who lives in friendship’s ties,  
finds all that’s sought for by the wise.  
Folly exclaims, and well she may,  
because I take her mask away ;  
if once I bring her to the sun,  
the painted harlot is undone.  
But prize, my child, oh ! prize my rules,  
and leave deception to her fools.

‘ Ambition deals in tinsel toys,  
her traffic gewgaws, fleeting joys !  
an arrant juggler in disguise,  
who holds false optics to your eyes.  
But ah ! how quick the shadows pass ;  
tho’ the bright visions through her glass  
charm at a distance ; yet, when near,  
the baseless fabrics disappear,



‘Nor riches boast intrinsic worth,  
their charms, at best, superior earth :  
these oft the heaven-born mind enslave,  
and make an honest man a knave.

‘Wealth cures my wants,’ the miser cries ;  
be not deceiv’d—the miser lies :  
one want he has, with all his store,  
that worst of wants! the want of more.

‘Take Pleasure, Wealth, and Pomp away,  
and where is Happiness?’ you say.

‘’Tis here—and may be your’s—for know  
I’m all that’s Happiness below.

‘To Vice I leave tumultuous joys,  
mine is the still and softer voice ;  
that whispers peace, when storms invade,  
and music through the midnight shade.

‘Come then, be mine in every part,  
nor give me less than all your heart ;  
when troubles discompose your breast,  
I’ll enter there, a cheerful guest :  
my converse shall your cares beguile,  
the little world within shall smile ;  
and then it scarce imports a jot,  
whether the great world frowns or not.

‘And when the closing scenes prevail,  
when wealth, state, pleasure, all shall fail ;  
all that a foolish world admires,  
or passion craves, or pride inspires ;  
at that important hour of need,  
Virtue shall prove a friend, indeed !  
My hands shall smooth thy dying bed,  
my arms sustain thy drooping head :  
and when the painful struggle’s o’er,  
and that vain thing, the world, no more ;

I'll bear my fav'rite son away  
to rapture, and eternal day.'



### FRIENDSHIP.

Friendship! thou soft, propitious power!  
sweet regent of the social hour!  
sublime thy joys, nor understood,  
but by the virtuous and the good!  
Cabal and Riot take thy name,  
but 't is a false affected claim.  
In heaven if Love and Friendship dwell,  
can they associate e'er with hell!

Thou art the same through change of times,  
through frozen zones, and burning climes:  
from the equator to the pole,  
the same kind angel through the whole.  
And since thy choice is always free,  
I bless thee for thy smiles on me.  
When sorrows swell the tempest high,  
thou, a kind port, art always nigh;  
for aching hearts a sov'reign cure,  
not soft Nepenthe \* half so sure!  
And when returning comforts rise,  
thou the bright sun that gilds our skies.

While these ideas warm'd my breast,  
my weary eye-lids stole to rest;  
when fancy re-assum'd the theme,  
and furnish'd this instructive dream.

I sail'd upon a stormy sea,  
(thousands embark'd alike with me)

\* Nepenthe is an herb, which being infused in wine, dispels grief. Is unknown to the moderns; but some believe it a kind of opium, and others take it for a species of bugloss. Plin. 21. 21f. & 25. 2.

my skiff was small, and weak beside,  
not built, methought, to stem the tide.  
The winds along the surges sweep,  
the wrecks lie scatter'd through the deep;  
aloud the foaming billows roar,  
unfriendly rocks forbid the shore.

While all our various course pursue,  
a spacious isle salutes our view.  
Two queens, with tempers diff'ring wide,  
this new discover'd world divide.  
A river parts their proper claim,  
and Truth its celebrated name.

One side a beauteous tract of ground  
presents, with living verdure crown'd.  
The seasons temp'rate, soft, and mild,  
and a kind sun that always smil'd.

Few storms molest the natives here;  
cold is the only ill they fear.  
This happy clime, and grateful soil,  
with plenty crowns the lab'rer's toil.

Here Friendship's happy kingdom grew,  
her realms were small, her subjects few.  
A thousand charms the palace grace,  
a rock of adamant its base.  
Tho' thunders roll, and lightnings fly,  
this structure braves the inclement sky.  
E'en Time, which other piles devours,  
and mocks the pride of human powers,  
partial to Friendship's pile alone,  
cements the joints, and binds the stone;  
ripens the beauties of the place;  
and calls to life each latent grace.

Around the throne in order stand  
four Amazons, a trusty band;



friends ever faithful to advise,  
or to defend when dangers rise.  
Here Fortitude in coat of mail!  
there Justice lifts her golden scale!  
two hardy chiefs! who persevere,  
with form erect, and brow severe;  
who smile at perils, pains, and death,  
and triumph with their latest breath.

Temp'rance, that comely matron,'s near,  
guardian of all the virtues here;  
adorn'd with every blooming grace,  
without one wrinkle in her face.

But Prudence most attracts the sight,  
and shines pre-eminently bright.  
To view her various thoughts that rise,  
she holds a mirror to her eyes;  
the mirror, faithful to its charge,  
reflects the virgin's soul in large.

A virtue with a softer air,  
was handmaid to the regal fair.  
This nymph, indulgent, constant, kind,  
derives from heaven her spotless mind:  
when actions wear a dubious face,  
puts the best meaning on the case;  
she spreads her arms, and bares her breast,  
takes in the naked and distress'd;  
prefers the hungry orphan's cries,  
and from her queen obtains supplies.  
The maid who acts this lovely part  
grasp'd in her hand a bleeding heart.  
Fair Charity! be thou my guest,  
and be thy constant couch my breast.

But virtues of inferior name,  
crowd round the throne with equal claim:



in loyalty by none surpass'd,  
 they hold allegiance to the last.  
 Not ancient records e'er can show,  
 that one deserted to the foe.

The river's other side display'd  
 alternate plots of flowers and shade,  
 where poppies shone with various hue,  
 where yielding willows plenteous grew;  
 and Humble \* plants, by trav'lers thought  
 with slow but certain poison fraught.  
 Beyond these scenes, the eye descri'd  
 a powerful realm extended wide,  
 whose bound'ries from north-east begun,  
 and stretch'd to meet the south-west sun.  
 Here Fatt'ry boasts despotic sway,  
 and basks in all the warmth of day.

Long practis'd in Deception's school,  
 the tyrant knew the arts to rule;  
 elated with the imperial robe,  
 she plans the conquest of the globe;  
 and aided by her servile trains,  
 leads kings, and sons of kings, in chains.  
 Her darling minister is Pride,  
 (who ne'er was known to change his side)  
 a friend to all her interests just,  
 and active to discharge his trust;  
 caress'd alike by high and low,  
 the idol of the belle and beau:  
 in every shape he shews his skill,  
 and forms her subjects to his will;  
 enters their houses and their hearts,  
 and gains his point before he parts.

The Humble plant bends down before the touch (as the Sensative plant  
 does from the touch), and is said by some to be the slow poison of the In-

Sure never minister was known  
so zealous for his sov'reign's throne!

Three sisters, similar in mien,  
were maids of honour to the queen:  
who farther favours shar'd beside,  
as daughters of her statesman Pride.  
The first, Conceit, with tow'ring crest,  
who look'd with scorn upon the rest;  
fond of herself, nor less, I deem,  
than duchess in her own esteem.

Next Affectation, fair and young,  
with half-form'd accents on her tongue,  
whose antic shapes, and various face,  
distorted every native grace.

Then Vanity, a wanton maid,  
flaunting in Brussels and brocade;  
fantastic, frolicsome, and wild,  
with all the trinkets of a child.

The people, loyal to the queen,  
wore their attachment in their mien:  
with cheerful heart they homage paid,  
and happiest he who most obey'd.  
While they who sought their own applause,  
promoted most their sov'reign's cause.  
'The minds of all were fraught with guile,  
their manners dissolute and vile;  
and every tribe, like Pagans, run  
to kneel before the rising sun.

But now some clam'rous sounds arise,  
and all the pleasing vision flies.

Once more I clos'd my eyes to sleep,  
and gain'd th' imaginary deep;  
Fancy presided at the helm,  
and steer'd me back to Friendship's realm.

But oh! with horror I relate  
the revolutions of her state.  
The Trojan chief could hardly more  
his Asiatic towers deplore.

For Flatt'ry view'd those fairer plains,  
with longing eyes, where Friendship reigns,  
with envy heard her neighbour's fame,  
and often sigh'd to gain the same.  
At length, by pride and int'rest fir'd,  
to Friendship's kingdom she aspir'd.

And now commencing open foe,  
she plans in thought some mighty blow;  
draws out her forces on the green,  
and marches to invade the queen.

The river Truth the hosts withstood,  
and roll'd her formidable flood.  
Her current strong, and deep, and clear,  
no fords were found, no ferries near:  
but as the troops approach'd the waves,  
their fears suggest a thousand graves;  
they all retir'd with haste extreme,  
and shudder'd at the dang'rous stream.

Hypocrisy the gulph explores;  
she forms a bridge, and joins the shores.  
Thus often art or fraud prevails,  
when military prowess fails.  
The troops an easy passage find,  
and Vict'ry follows close behind.

Friendship with ardour charg'd her foes,  
and now the fight promiscuous grows;  
but Flatt'ry threw a poison'd dart,  
and pierc'd the Empress to the heart.  
The Virtues all around were seen  
to fall in heaps about the queen.

The tyrant stript the mangled fair,  
 she wore her spoils, assum'd her air;  
 and mounting next the sufferer's throne,  
 claim'd the queen's titles as her own.

' Ah! injur'd maid,' aloud I cry'd,  
 ' Ah! injur'd maid, the rocks reply'd:'  
 but judge my griefs, and share them too,  
 for the sad tale pertains to you;  
 judge, reader, how severe the wound,  
 when Friendship's foes were mine, I found;  
 when the sad scene of pride and guile  
 was Britain's poor degen'rate isle.

The Amazons, who propp'd the state,  
 haply surviv'd the gen'ral fate.  
 Justice to Powis-House is fled,  
 and Yorke sustains her radiant head.  
 The virtue Fortitude appears  
 in open day at Ligonier's;  
 illustrious heroine of the sky,  
 who leads to vanquish or to die!  
 'T was she our vet'rans' breasts inspir'd,  
 when Belgia's faithless sons retir'd:  
 for Tournay's treach'rous towers can tell  
 Britannia's children greatly fell.

No partial virtue of the plain!  
 she rous'd the lions of the main:  
 hence Vernon's \* little fleet succeeds,  
 and hence the gen'rous Cornwall † bleeds!  
 hence Grenville ‡ glorious!—for she smil'd  
 on the young hero from a child.

Tho' in high life such virtues dwell,  
 they'll suit plebeian breasts as well.

\* At Porto Bello.

† Against the combin'd fleets of France and Spain.

‡ Died in a later engagement with the French fleet.

Say, that the mighty and the great  
blaze like meridian suns of state;  
effulgent excellence display,  
like Hallifax, in floods of day;  
our lesser orbs may pour their light,  
like the mild crescent of the night.  
Tho' pale our beams, and small our sphere,  
still we may shine serene and clear.

Give to the judge the scarlet gown,  
to martial souls the civic crown:  
What then? is merit their's alone?  
have we no worth to call our own?  
shall we not vindicate our part,  
in the firm breast, and upright heart?  
Reader, these virtues may be thine,  
tho' in superior light they shine.  
I can't discharge great Hardwick's trust—  
true—but my soul may still be just.  
And tho' I can't the state defend,  
I'll draw the sword to serve my friend.

Two golden virtues are behind,  
of equal import to the mind;  
Prudence, to point out Wisdom's way,  
or to reclaim us when we stray;  
Temp'rance, to guard the youthful heart,  
when Vice and Folly throw the dart;  
each virtue, let the world agree,  
daily resides with you and me.  
And when our souls in friendship join,  
we'll deem the social bond divine;  
through every scene maintain our trust,  
nor e'er be timid or unjust.  
That breast where Honour builds his throne,  
that breast which Virtue calls her own,

nor int'rest warps, nor fear appals,  
 when danger frowns, or lucre calls.  
 No! the true friend collected stands,  
 fearless his heart, and pure his hands.  
 Let int'rest plead, let storms arise,  
 he dares be honest, tho' he dies.



### MARRIAGE.

Inscribed to Miss \*\*\*\*.

Fairest, this vision is thy due,  
 I form'd the instructive plan for you.  
 Slight not the rules of thoughtful age,  
 your welfare actuates every page;  
 but ponder well my sacred theme,  
 and tremble while you read my dream.

Those awful words, "Till death do part,"  
 may well alarm the youthful heart:  
 no after-thought when once a wife;  
 the die is cast, and cast for life;  
 yet thousands venture every day,  
 as some base passion leads the way.  
 Pert Silvia talks of wedlock-scenes,  
 tho' hardly enter'd on her teens;  
 smiles on her whining spark, and hears  
 the sugar'd speech with raptur'd ears;  
 impatient of a parent's rule,  
 she leaves her sire, and weds a fool.  
 Want enters at the guardless door,  
 and love is fled, to come no more.

Some few there are of sordid mould,  
 who barter youth and bloom for gold:



careless with what, or whom they mate,  
their ruling passion's all for state.

But Hymen, gen'rous, just, and kind,  
abhors the mercenary mind:

such rebels groan beneath his rod,  
for Hymen's a vindictive god;

'Be joyless every night,' he said,  
'and barren be their nuptial bed.'

Attend, my fair, to Wisdom's voice,  
a better fate shall crown thy choice.

A married life, to speak the best,  
is all a lottery confest:

yet if my fair one will be wise,

I will insure my girl a prize;

tho' not a prize to match thy worth,  
perhaps thy equal's not on earth.

'Tis an important point to know,  
there's no perfection here below.

Man's an odd compound, after all,  
and ever has been since the fall.

Say, that he loves you from his soul,  
still man is proud, nor brooks controul.

And tho' a slave in Love's soft school,  
in wedlock claims his right to rule.

The best, in short, has faults about him,  
if few those faults, you must not flout him.

With some, indeed, you can't dispense,  
as want of temper, and of sense.

For when the sun deserts the skies,  
and the dull evening winters rise,

then for a husband's social power,  
to form the calm, conversive hour:

the treasures of thy breast explore,  
from that rich mine to draw the ore;



fondly each gen'rous thought refine,  
and give thy native gold to shine;  
shew thee, as really thou art,  
tho' fair, yet fairer still at heart.

Say, when life's purple blossoms fade,  
as soon they must, thou charming maid!  
when in thy cheeks the roses die,  
and sickness clouds that brilliant eye;  
say, when or age or pains invade,  
and those dear limbs shall call for aid;  
if thou be fetter'd to a fool,  
shall not his transient passion cool?  
And when thy health and beauty end,  
shall thy weak mate persist a friend?  
But to a man of sense, my dear,  
e'en then thou lovely shalt appear;  
he'll share the griefs that wound thy heart,  
and, weeping, claim the larger part;  
tho' age impair that beauteous face,  
he'll prize the pearl beyond its case.

In wedlock when the sexes meet,  
friendship is only then complete.  
"Blest state! where souls each other draw,  
where love is liberty and law!"  
the choicest blessing found below,  
that man can wish, or Heaven bestow!  
Trust me, these raptures are divine,  
for lovely Chloe once was mine;  
nor fear the varnish of my style,  
tho' poet, I'm estrang'd to guile.  
Ah me! my faithful lips impart  
the genuine language of my heart!

When bards extol their patrons high,  
perhaps 't is gold extorts the lie;

perhaps the poor reward of bread—  
but who burns incense to the dead?  
He, whom a fond affection draws,  
careless of censure or applause;  
whose soul is upright and sincere,  
with nought to wish, and nought to fear.

Now to my visionary scheme  
attend, and profit by my dream.

Amidst the slumbers of the night,  
a stately temple rose to sight;  
and ancient as the human race,  
if nature's purposes you trace;  
This fane, by all the wise rever'd,  
to wedlock's powerful god was rear'd.  
Hard by I saw a graceful sage,  
his locks were frôsted o'er by age;  
his garb was plain, his mind serene,  
and wisdom dignified his mien.

With curious search his name I sought,  
and found 't was Hymen's fav'rite—Thought.

Apace the giddy crowds advance,  
and a lewd satyr led the dance:  
I griev'd to see whole thousands run,  
for oh! what thousands were undone!  
'The sage, when these mad troops he spy'd,  
in pity flew to join their side:  
the disconcerted pairs began  
to rail against him, to a man:  
vow'd they were strangers to his name,  
nor knew from whence the dotard came.

But mark the sequel—for this truth  
highly concerns impetuous youth:  
long ere the honey-moon could wane,  
Perdition seiz'd on every twain;

at every house, and all day long,  
Repentance ply'd her scorpion thong;  
Disgust was there with frowning mien,  
and every wayward child of Spleen.

Hymen approach'd his awful fane,  
attended by a num'rous train:  
Love with each soft and nameless grace,  
was first in favour, and in place:  
then came the god with solemn gait,  
whose every word was big with fate;  
his hand a flaming taper bore,  
that sacred symbol, fam'd of yore:  
Virtue, adorn'd with every charm,  
sustain'd the god's incumbent arm;  
Beauty improv'd the glowing scene  
with all the roses of eighteen:  
Youth led the gaily-smiling fair,  
his purple pinions wav'd in air:  
Wealth, a close hunk, walk'd hobbling nigh,  
with vulture-claw, and eagle-eye,  
who threescore years had seen or more,  
(t is said his coat had seen a score;)  
proud was the wretch, tho' clad in rags,  
presuming much upon his bags.

A female next her arts display'd,  
poets alone can paint the maid:  
trust me, Hogarth (tho' great thy fame),  
't would pose thy skill to draw the same;  
and yet thy mimic power is more  
than ever painter's was before:  
now she was fair as cygnet's down,  
now as Mat. Prior's Emma, brown;  
and, changing as the changing flower,  
her dress she vary'd every hour:

't was Fancy, child!—you know the fair,  
who pins your gown, and sets your hair.

Lo! the god mounts his throne of state,  
and sits the arbiter of fate:

his head with radiant glories drest,  
gently reclin'd on Virtue's breast:  
Love took his station on the right,  
his quiver beam'd with golden light.

Beauty usurp'd the second place,  
ambitious of distinguish'd grace;  
she claim'd this ceremonial joy,  
because related to the boy;  
(said it was her's to point his dart,  
and speed its passage to the heart);  
while on the god's inferior hand  
Fancy and Wealth obtain'd their stand.

And now the hallow'd rites proceed,  
and now a thousand heart-strings bleed.

I saw a blooming trembling bride,  
a toothless lover join'd her side;  
averse she turn'd her weeping face,  
and shudder'd at the cold embrace.

But various baits their force impart:  
thus titles lie at Celia's heart:

a passion much too foul to name,  
costs supercilious prudes their fame:  
prudes wed to publicans and sinners;  
the hungry poet weds for dinners.

The god with frown indignant view'd  
the rabble covetous or lewd;  
by every vice his altars stain'd,  
by every fool his rites profan'd:  
when Love complain'd of Wealth aloud,  
affirming Wealth debauch'd the crowd;

drew up in form his heavy charge,  
desiring to be heard at large.

The god consents, the throng divide,  
the young espous'd the plaintiff's side:  
the old declar'd for the defendant,  
for Age is Money's sworn attendant.

Love said, that wedlock was design'd  
by gracious Heaven to match the mind;  
to pair the tender and the just,  
and his the delegated trust:  
that Wealth had play'd a knavish part,  
and taught the tongue to wrong the heart;  
but what avails the faithless voice?  
the injur'd heart disdains the choice.

Wealth strait reply'd, that Love was blind  
and talk'd at random of the mind:  
that killing eyes, and bleeding hearts,  
and all th' artillery of darts,  
were long ago exploded fancies,  
and laugh'd at even in romances.  
Poets, indeed, style Love a treat,  
perhaps for want of better meat:  
and Love might be delicious fare,  
could we, like poets, live on air.  
But grant that angels feast on Love,  
(those purer essences above)  
yet Albion's sons, he understood,  
preferr'd a more substantial food.  
Thus while with gibes he dress'd his cause,  
his gray admirers hemm'd applause.

With seeming conquest pert and proud,  
Wealth shook his sides, and chuckled loud;  
when Fortune, to restrain his pride,  
and fond to favour Love beside,

op'ning the miser's tape-ty'd vest,  
disclos'd the cares which stung his breast:  
Wealth stood abash'd at his disgrace,  
and a deep crimson flush'd his face.

Love sweetly simper'd at the sight,  
his gay adherents laugh'd outright.  
The god, tho' grave his temper, smil'd,  
for Hymen dearly priz'd the child.  
But he who triumphs o'er his brother,  
in turn is laugh'd at by another.  
Such cruel scores we often find  
repaid the criminal in kind.

For Poverty, that famish'd fiend!  
ambitious of a wealthy friend,  
advanc'd into the Miser's place,  
and star'd the stripling in the face;  
whose lips grew pale, and cold as clay;  
I thought the chit would swoon away.

The god was studious to employ  
his cares to aid the vanquish'd boy;  
and therefore issu'd his decree,  
that the two parties strait agree.  
When both obey'd the god's commands,  
and Love and Riches join'd their hands.

What wond'rous change in each was wrought,  
believe me, fair, surpasses thought.  
If Love had many charms before,  
he now had charms, ten thousand more.  
If wealth had serpents in his breast,  
they now were dead, or lull'd to rest.

Beauty, that vain affected thing,  
who join'd the hymeneal ring,  
approach'd with round unthinking face,  
and thus the trifler states her case.



She said, that Love's complaints, 't was known  
exactly tally'd with her own;  
that Wealth had learn'd the felon's arts,  
and robb'd her of a thousand hearts;  
desiring judgment against Wealth,  
for falsehood, perjury, and stealth:  
all which she could on oath depose,  
and hop'd the court would slit his nose.

But Hymen, when he heard her name,  
call her an interloping dame;  
look'd through the crowd with angry state,  
and blam'd the porter at the gate,  
for giving entrance to the fair,  
when she was no essential there.

To sink this haughty tyrant's pride,  
he order'd Fancy to preside.  
Hence, when debates on beauty rise,  
and each bright fair disputes the prize,  
to Fancy's court we strait apply,  
and wait the sentence of her eye;  
in Beauty's realms she holds the seals,  
and her awards preclude appeals.



### LIFE.

Let not the young my precepts shun;  
who slight good counsels, are undone.  
Your poet sung of Love's delights,  
of halcyon days and joyous nights;  
to the gay fancy lovely themes;  
and fain I'd hope they're more than dreams.  
But, if you please, before we part,  
I'd speak a language to your heart.



We'll talk of Life, tho' much I fear,  
th' ungrateful tale will wound your ear.  
You raise your sanguine thoughts too high,  
and hardly know the reason why:  
but say Life's tree bears golden fruit,  
some canker shall corrode the root;  
some unexpected storm shall rise;  
or scorching suns, or chilling skies;  
and (if experienc'd truths avail)  
all your autumnal hopes shall fail.

'But, Poet, whence such wide extremes?  
well may you style your labours Dreams.

A son of sorrow thou, I ween,  
whose Visions are the brats of Spleen.  
Is bliss a vague unmeaning name—  
speak then the passion's use or aim;  
why rage desires without controul,  
and rouse such whirlwinds in the soul;  
why Hope erects her tow'ring crest,  
and laughs, and riots in the breast;  
think not, my weaker brain turns round,  
think not, I tread on fairy ground.  
Think not, your pulse alone beats true—  
mine makes as healthful music too.

Our joys, when life's soft spring we trace,  
put forth their early buds apace.

See the bloom loads the tender shoot,  
the bloom conceals the future fruit.

Yes, manhood's warm meridian sun  
shall ripen what in spring begun.

Thus infant roses, ere they blow,  
in germinating clusters grow;  
and only wait the summer's ray,  
to burst and blossom to the day.'



What said the gay unthinking boy?—  
methought Hilario talk'd of joy!  
Tell, if thou canst, whence joys arise,  
or what those mighty joys you prize.  
You'll find (and trust superior years)  
the vale of life a vale tears.  
Could Wisdom teach, where joys abound,  
or riches purchase them, when found,  
would scepter'd Solomon complain,  
that all was fleeting, false, and vain?  
Yet scepter'd Solomon could say,  
returning clouds obscur'd his day.  
Those maxims which the preacher drew,  
the royal sage experienc'd true.  
He knew the various ills that wait  
our infant and meridian state;  
that toys our earliest thoughts engage,  
and diff'rent toys maturer age;  
that grief at every stage appears,  
but diff'rent griefs at diff'rent years;  
that vanity is seen, in part,  
inscrib'd on every human heart;  
in the child's breast the spark began,  
grows with his growth, and glares in man.  
But when in life we journey late,  
if follies die, do griefs abate?  
Ah! what is Life at fourscore years?—  
one dark, rough road of sighs, groans, pains, & tears.  
Perhaps you'll think I act the same,  
as a sly sharper plays his game:  
you triumph every deal that's past,  
he's sure to triumph at the last;  
who often wins some thousands more  
than twice the sum you won before.

But I'm a loser with the rest,  
for Life is all a deal at best;  
where not the prize of wealth or fame,  
repays the trouble of the game;  
(a truth no winner e'er deny'd,  
an hour before that winner dy'd).  
Not that with me these prizes shine,  
for neither fame nor wealth are mine.  
My cards!—a weak plebeian band,  
with scarce an honour in my hand,  
And, since my trumps are very few,  
what have I more to boast than you!  
Nor am I gainer by your fall!  
that harlot Fortune bubbles all.

'Tis truth (receive it ill or well)  
'tis melancholy truth I tell.  
Why should the preacher take your pence,  
and smother truth to flatter sense?  
I'm sure, physicians have no merit,  
who kill, through lenity of spirit.  
That Life's a game, divines confess,  
this says at cards, and that at chess:  
but if our views be center'd here,  
'tis all a losing game, I fear.

Sailors, you know, when wars obtain,  
and hostile vessels crowd the main,  
if they discover from afar  
a bark, as distant as a star,  
hold the perspective to their eyes,  
to learn its colours, strength, and size;  
and when this secret once they know,  
make ready to receive the foe.  
Let you and I from sailors learn  
important truths of like concern.



I clos'd the day, as custom led,  
with reading, till the time of bed;  
where Fancy, at the midnight hour,  
again display'd her magic power,  
(for know, that Fancy like a spright,  
prefers the silent scenes of night).  
She lodg'd me in a neighb'ring wood,  
no matter where the thicket stood;  
the genius of the place was nigh,  
and held two pictures to my eye.  
The curious painter had pourtray'd  
Life in each just and genuine shade.  
They, who have only known its dawn,  
may think these lines too deeply drawn;  
but riper years, I fear, will shew,  
the wiser artist paints too true.

One piece presents a rueful wild,  
where not a summer's sun had smil'd:  
the road with thorns is cover'd wide,  
and Grief sits weeping by the side;  
her tears with constant tenor flow,  
and form a mournful lake below;  
whose silent waters, dark and deep,  
through all the gloomy valley creep.

Passions that flatter, or that slay,  
are beasts that fawn, or birds that prey.  
Here Vice assumes the serpent's shape;  
there Folly personates the ape;  
here Av'rice gripes with harpies claws;  
there Malice grins with tyger's jaws;  
while sons of Mischief, Art, and Guile,  
are alligators of the Nile.

E'en Pleasure acts a treach'rous part,  
she charms the sense, but stings the heart;

and when she gulls us of our wealth,  
or that superior pearl, our health,  
restores us nought but pains and woe,  
and drowns us in the lake below.

There a commission'd angel stands,  
with desolation in his hands!  
He sends the all-devouring flame,  
and cities hardly boast a name:  
or wings the pestilential blast,  
and, lo! ten thousands breathe their last:  
he speaks—obedient tempests roar,  
and guilty nations are no more:  
he speaks—the fury Discord raves,  
and sweeps whole armies to their graves:  
or Famine lifts her mildew'd hand,  
and Hunger howls through all the land.

Oh! what a wretch is man, I cry'd,  
expos'd to death on every side!  
and sure as born, to be undone  
by evils which he cannot shun!  
besides a thousand baits to sin,  
a thousand traitors lodg'd within!  
For soon as Vice assaults the heart,  
the rebels take the demon's part.

I sigh, my aching bosom bleeds;  
when strait the milder plan succeeds.  
The lake of tears, the dreary shore,  
the same as in the piece before.  
But gleams of light are here display'd,  
to cheer the eye and gild the shade.  
Affliction speaks a softer style,  
and Disappointment wears a smile.  
A group of Virtues blossom near,  
their roots improve by every tear.

Here Patience, gentle maid! is nigh,  
 to calm the storm, and wipe the eye;  
 Hope acts the kind physician's part,  
 and warms the solitary heart;  
 Religion nobler comfort brings,  
 disarms our griefs, or blunts their stings;  
 points out the balance on the whole,  
 and Heaven rewards the struggling soul.

But while these raptures I pursue,  
 the genius suddenly withdrew.

### DEATH.

'Tis thought my Visions are too grave;\*  
 a proof I'm no designing knave.  
 Perhaps if Int'rest held the scales,  
 I had devis'd quite diff'rent tales;  
 had join'd the laughing low buffoon,  
 and scribbled satire and lampoon;  
 or stirr'd each source of soft desire,  
 and fann'd the coals of wanton fire;  
 then had my paltry Visions sold,  
 yes, all my dreams had turn'd to gold;  
 had prov'd the darlings of the town,  
 and I—a poet of renown!

Let not my awful theme surprise,  
 let no unmanly fears arise.  
 I wear no melancholy hue,  
 no wreaths of cypress or of yew.  
 The shroud, the coffin, pall, or herse,  
 shall ne'er deform my softer verse:

\* See the "Monthly Review of new Books," for February 1754.

let me consign the fun'ral plume,  
the heralds paint, the sculptur'd tomb,  
and all the solemn farce of graves,  
to undertakers and their slaves.

You know, that moral writers say  
the world's a stage, and life a play;  
that in this drama to succeed,  
requires much thought, and toil, indeed!  
there still remains one labour more,  
perhaps a greater than before.  
Indulge the search, and you shall find  
the harder task is still behind;  
that harder task to quit the stage  
in early youth, or riper age;  
to leave the company and place,  
with firmness, dignity, and grace.

Come, then, the closing scenes survey,  
't is the last act which crowns the play.  
Do well this grand decisive part,  
and gain the plaudit of your heart.  
Few greatly live in Wisdom's eye—  
but, oh! how few who greatly die!  
Who, when their days approach an end,  
can meet the foe, as friend meets friend.

Instructive heroes! tell us whence  
your noble scorn of flesh and sense!  
You part from all we prize so dear,  
nor drop one soft reluctant tear:  
part from those tender joys of life,  
the friend, the parent, child, and wife.  
Death's black and stormy gulph you brave,  
and ride exulting on the wave;  
deem thrones but trifles all!—no more—  
nor send one wishful look to shore.



For foreign ports and lands unknown,  
thus the firm sailor leaves his own ;  
obedient to the rising gale,  
unmoors his bark, and spreads his sail ;  
defies the ocean and the wind,  
nor mourns the joys he leaves behind.

Is Death a powerful monarch? True—  
Perhaps you dread the tyrant too!  
Fear, like a fog, precludes the light,  
or swells the object to the sight.

Attend my visionary page,  
and I'll disarm the tyrant's rage.

Come, let this ghastly form appear,  
he's not so terrible when near.

Distance deludes th' unwary eye,  
so clouds seem monsters in the sky :  
hold frequent converse with him now,  
he'll daily wear a milder brow.

Why is my theme with terror fraught?  
because you shun the frequent thought.

Say, when the captive pard is nigh  
whence thy pale cheek and frightened eye?

Say, why dismay'd thy manly breast,  
when the grim lion shakes his crest?

because these savage sights are new—  
no keeper shudders at the view.

Keepers, accusom'd to the scene,  
approach the dens with look serene,  
fearless their grisly charge explore,  
and smile to hear the tyrants roar.

' Ay—but to die! to bid adieu!  
an everlasting farewell too!

farewell to every joy around!

Oh! the heart sickens at the sound!

Stay, stripling—thou art poorly taught—  
joy didst thou say?—discard the thought.  
Joys are a rich celestial fruit,  
and scorn a sublunary root.

What wears the face of joy below,  
is often found but splendid woe.  
Joys here, like unsubstantial fame,  
are nothings with a pompous name;  
or else, like comets in the sphere,  
shine with destruction in their rear.

Passions, like clouds, obscure the sight,  
hence mortals seldom judge aright.  
The world's a harsh unfruitful soil,  
yet still we hope, and still we toil:  
deceive ourselves with wond'rous art,  
and disappointment wrings the heart.

Thus when a mist collects around,  
and hovers o'er a barren ground,  
the poor deluded trav'ler spies  
imagin'd trees and structures rise  
but when the shrouded sun is clear,  
the desert and the rocks appear.

' Ah—but when youthful blood runs high,  
sure 't is a dreadful thing to die!  
To die! and what exalts the gloom,  
I'm told that man survives the tomb!  
O! can the learned prelate find  
what future scenes await the mind?  
Where wings the soul, dislodg'd from clay?  
some courteous angel point the way!  
That unknown somewhere in the skies!  
say, where that unknown somewhere lies;  
and kindly prove, when life is o'er,  
that pains and sorrows are no more.

For doubtless, dying is a curse,  
if present ills be chang'd for worse.'

Hush, my young friend, forego the theme,  
and listen to your poet's dream.

Ere-while I took an evening walk,  
Honorio join'd in social talk.

Along the lawns the zephyrs sweep,  
each ruder wind was lull'd asleep.

The sky all beauteous to behold,  
was streak'd with azure, green, and gold ;

but, tho' serenely soft and fair,  
Fever hung brooding in the air ;

then settled on Honorio's breast,  
which shudder'd at the fatal guest.

No drugs the kindly wish fulfil,  
disease eludes the doctor's skill.

The poison spreads through all the frame,  
ferments and kindles into flame.

From side to side Honorio turns,  
and now with thirst insatiate burns.

His eyes resign their wonted grace,  
those friendly lamps expire apace !

the brain's an useless organ grown,  
and Reason tumbled from his throne.—

But while the purple surges glow,  
the currents thicken as they flow ;  
the blood in every distant part  
stagnates and disappoints the heart ;  
defrauded of its crimson store,  
the vital engine plays no more.

Honorio dead, the fun'ral bell  
call'd every friend to bid farewell.  
I join'd the melancholy bier,  
and dropp'd the unavailing tear.

The clock struck twelve—when nature sought  
repose from all the pangs of thought ;  
and while my limbs were sunk to rest,  
a vision sooth'd my troubled breast.

I dream'd the spectre Death appear'd,  
I dream'd his hollow voice I heard!  
Methought th' imperial tyrant wore  
a state no prince assum'd before.  
All nature fetch'd a general groan,  
and lay expiring round his throne.

I gaz'd—when strait arose to sight  
the most detested fiend of night.  
He shuffled with unequal pace,  
and conscious shame deform'd his face.  
With jealous leer he squinted round,  
or fix'd his eyes upon the ground.  
From hell this frightful monster came,  
Sin was his sire, and Guilt his name.

This fury, with officious care,  
waited around the sov'reign's chair;  
in robes of terrors drest the king;  
and arm'd him with a baneful sting;  
gave fierceness to the tyrant's eye,  
and hung the sword upon his thigh.  
Diseases next, a hideous crowd!  
proclaim'd their master's empire loud ;  
and all obedient to his will,  
flew in commission'd troops to kill.

A rising whirlwind shakes the poles,  
and lightning glares, and thunder rolls.  
The monarch and his train prepare  
to range the foul tempestuous air.  
Strait to his shoulders he applies  
two pinions of enormous size!

Methought I saw the ghastly form  
stretch his black wings, and mount the storm  
When Fancy's airy horse I strode,  
and join'd the army on the road.  
As the grim conqu'ror urg'd his way,  
he scatter'd terror and dismay.  
Thousands a pensive aspect wore,  
thousands who sneer'd at Death before.  
Life's records rise on every side,  
and Conscience spreads those volumes wide;  
which faithful registers were brought  
by pale-ey'd Fear and busy Thought.  
Those faults which artful men conceal,  
stand here engrav'd with pen of steel,  
by Conscience, that impartial scribe!  
whose honest palm disdains a bribe.  
Their actions all like critics view,  
and all like faithful critics too.  
As guilt had stain'd life's various stage,  
what tears of blood bedew'd the page!  
all shudder'd at the black account,  
and scarce believ'd the vast amount!  
All vow'd a sudden change of heart,  
would Death relent, and sheath his dart.  
But, when the awful foe withdrew,  
all to their follies fled anew.

So when a wolf, who scours at large,  
springs on the shepherd's fleecy charge,  
the flock in wild disorder fly,  
and cast behind a frequent eye;  
but when the victim's borne away,  
they rush to pasture and to play.

Indulge my dream, and let my pen  
paint those unmeaning creatures, men.

Carus, with pains and sickness worn,  
chides the slow night, and sighs for morn;  
soon as he views the eastern ray,  
he mourns the quick return of day;  
hourly laments protracted breath,  
and courts the healing hand of Death.

Verres, oppress'd with guilt and shame,  
shipwreck'd in fortune, health, and fame,  
pines for his dark sepulchral bed,  
to mingle with th' unheeded dead.

With fourscore years gray Natho bends,  
a burden to himself and friends;  
and with impatience seems to wait  
the friendly hand of ling'ring fate.  
So hirelings wish their labour done,  
and often eye the western sun.

The monarch hears their various grief,  
descends, and brings the wish'd relief.  
On Death with wild surprise they star'd;  
all seem'd averse! all unprepar'd!

As torrents sweep with rapid force,  
the grave's pale chief pursu'd his course.  
No human power can or withstand,  
or shun the conquests of his hand.  
Oh! could the prince of upright mind,  
and, as a guardian angel, kind,  
with every heartfelt worth beside,  
turn the keen shaft of Death aside,  
when would the brave Augustus join  
the ashes of his sacred line?  
But Death maintains no partial war,  
he mocks a sultan or a czar.  
He lays his iron hand on all—  
yes, kings, and sons of kings, must fall!

a truth Britannia lately felt,  
and trembled to her centre! \*—  
Could ablest statesmen ward the blow,  
would Granville own this common foe?  
for greater talents ne'er were known  
to grace the fav'rite of a throne.

Could genius save—wit, learning, fire—  
tell me, would Chesterfield expire?  
Say, would his glorious sun decline,  
and set like your pale star or mine?

Could every virtue of the sky—  
would Herring, † Butler, ‡ Secker || die?

Why this address to peerage all—  
untitled Allen's virtues call!

If Allen's worth demands a place,  
lords, with your leave, 't is no disgrace.  
'Tho' high your ranks in Heralds' rolls,  
know virtue too ennobles souls.

By her that private man's renown'd  
who pours a thousand blessings round.

While Allen takes Affliction's part,  
and draws out all his gen'rous heart;  
anxious to seize the fleeting day,  
lest unimprov'd it steal away;

While thus he walks with jealous strife  
through goodness, as he walks through life,  
shall not I mark his radiant path?—  
rise, muse, and sing the Man of Bath!  
publish abroad, could goodness save,  
Allen would disappoint the grave;  
translated to the heavenly shore,  
like Enoch, when his walk was o'er.

\* Referring to the death of his late Royal Highness Frederick Prince  
Wales. † Archbishop of Canterbury. ‡ Late Bishop  
Durham. || Bishop of Oxford.



Not Beauty's powerful pleas restrain—  
 her pleas are trifling, weak, and vain;  
 for women pierce with shrieks the air,  
 smite their bare breasts, and rend their hair.  
 All have a doleful tale to tell,  
 how friends, sons, daughters, husbands fell!

Alas! is life our fav'rite theme!  
 'tis all a vain or painful dream.

A dream which fools or cowards prize,  
 but slighted by the brave or wise.

Who lives, for others' ills must groan,  
 or bleed for sorrows of his own;  
 must journey on with weeping eye,  
 then pant, sink, agonize, and die.

And shall a man arraign the skies,  
 because man lives, and mourns, and dies?  
 impatient reptile! Reason cry'd;  
 arraign thy passion and thy pride.

Retire, and commune with thy heart,  
 ask, whence thou cam'st, and what thou art.  
 Explore thy body and thy mind,  
 thy station too, why here assign'd.

The search shall teach thee life to prize,  
 and make thee grateful, good, and wise.

Why do you roam to foreign climes,  
 to study nations, modes, and times;  
 science often dearly bought,  
 and often what avails you nought?

Go, man, and act a wiser part,  
 study the science of your heart.

This home philosophy, you know,  
 was priz'd some thousand years ago.\*

Prize  
 Bishop  
 "know thyself"—a celebrated saying of Chilo, one of the seven wise  
 Greece.

Then why abroad a frequent guest?  
Why such a stranger to your breast?  
Why turn so many volumes o'er,  
till Dodsley can supply no more?  
Not all the volumes on thy shelf,  
are worth that single volume, Self.  
For who this sacred book declines,  
howe'er in other arts he shines;  
tho' smit with Pindar's noble rage,  
or vers'd in Tully's manly page;  
tho' deeply read in Plato's school;  
with all his knowledge is a fool.

Proclaim the truth—say, what is man?  
His body from the dust began;  
and when a few short years are o'er,  
the crumbling fabric is no more.

But whence the soul? From heaven it came  
Oh! prize this intellectual flame.  
This nobler Self with rapture scan,  
't is mind alone which makes the man.  
Trust me, there's not a joy on earth,  
but from the soul derives its birth.  
Ask the young rake (he'll answer right)  
who treats by day, and drinks by night,  
what makes his entertainments shine,  
what gives the relish to his wine;  
he'll tell thee (if he scorn the beast),  
that social pleasures form the feast.  
The charms of Beauty too shall cloy,  
unless the soul exalts the joy.  
The mind must animate the face,  
or cold and tasteless every grace.

What! must the soul her powers dispense  
to raise and swell the joys of sense?—

Know too, the joys of sense controul,  
and clog the motions of the soul;  
forbid her pinions to aspire,  
damp and impair her native fire:  
and sure as Sense (that tyrant!) reigns,  
she holds the empress, Soul, in chains,  
inglorious bondage to the mind,  
heaven-born, sublime, and unconfin'd!  
She's independent, fair, and great,  
and justly claims a large estate;  
she asks no borrow'd aids to shine,  
she boasts within a golden mine;  
but, like the treasures of Peru,  
her wealth lies deep and far from view.  
Say, shall the man who knows her worth,  
debase her dignity and birth;  
or e'er repine at Heaven's decree,  
who kindly gave her leave to be;  
call'd her from nothing into day,  
and built her tenement of clay?  
hear and accept me for your guide,  
(Reason shall ne'er desert your side).  
Who listens to my wiser voice,  
can't but applaud his Maker's choice;  
pleas'd with that First and Sovereign Cause,  
pleas'd with unerring Wisdom's laws;  
secure, since Sovereign Goodness reigns,  
secure, since Sovereign Power obtains.

With curious eyes review thy frame,  
this science shall direct thy claim.  
Dost thou indulge a double view,  
a long, long life, and happy too?  
Perhaps a farther boon you crave—  
to lie down easy in the grave?



Know then my dictates must prevail,  
or surely each fond wish shall fail.—

Come then, is happiness thy aim?  
let mental joys be all thy game.

Repeat the search, and mend your pace,  
the capture shall reward the chace.

Let every minute, as it springs,  
convey fresh knowledge on its wings;  
let every minute, as it flies,  
record thee good as well as wise.

While such pursuits your thoughts engage,  
in a few years you'll live an age.

Who measures life by rolling years?  
fools measure by revolving spheres.

Go thou, and fetch th' unerring rule  
from Virtue's, and from Wisdom's school.

Who well improves life's shortest day,  
will scarce regret its setting ray;  
contented with his share of light,  
nor fear nor wish th' approach of night.

And when Disease assaults the heart,  
when Sickness triumphs over Art,  
reflections on a life well past,  
shall prove a cordial to the last;  
this med'cine shall the soul sustain,  
and soften or suspend her pain;  
shall break Death's fell tyrannic power,  
and calm the troubled dying hour.

Blest rules of cool prudential age!  
I listen'd, and rever'd the sage.

When, lo! a form divinely bright  
descends and bursts upon my sight,  
a seraph of illustrious birth!

(Religion was her name on earth),



supremely sweet her radiant face,  
and blooming with celestial grace!  
Three shining cherubs form'd her train,  
wav'd their light wings, and reach'd the plain;  
Faith, with sublime and piercing eye,  
and pinions flutt'ring for the sky;  
here Hope, that smiling angel, stands,  
and golden anchors grace her hands:  
there Charity, in robes of white,  
fairest and fav'rite maid of light!

The seraph spake—' 'T is Reason's part,  
to govern and to guard the heart;  
to lull the wayward soul to rest,  
when hopes and fears distract the breast.  
Reason may calm this doubtful strife,  
and steer thy bark through various life:  
but when the storms of death are nigh,  
and midnight darkness veils the sky,  
shall reason then direct thy sail,  
disperse the clouds, or sink the gale?  
Stranger, this skill alone is mine,  
skill! that transcends his scanty line.'

That hoary sage has counsell'd right—  
be wise, nor scorn his friendly light.  
Revere thyself—thou 'rt near ally'd  
to angels on thy better side.  
How various e'er their ranks or kinds,  
angels are but unbodied minds;  
when the partition walls decay,  
men emerge angels from their clay.

Yes, when the frailer body dies,  
the soul asserts her kindred skies.  
But minds, tho' sprung from heavenly race,  
must first be tutor'd for the place.

(The joys above are understood,  
and relish'd only by the good.)  
Who shall assume this guardian care?  
Who shall secure their birthright there?  
Souls are my charge—to me 't is given  
to train them for their native heaven.

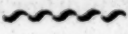
‘ Know then—who bow the early knee,  
and give the willing heart to me;  
who wisely, when temptation waits,  
elude her frauds, and spurn her baits;  
who dare to own my injur'd cause,  
(tho' fools deride my sacred laws);  
or scorn to deviate to the wrong,  
tho' Persecution lift her thong;  
tho' all the sons of hell conspire  
to raise the stake and light the fire;  
know that for such superior souls,  
there lies a bliss beyond the poles;  
where spirits shine with purer ray,  
and brighten to meridian day;  
where love, where boundless friendship rules,  
(no friends that change, no love that cools!)  
where rising floods of knowledge roll,  
and pour and pour upon the soul!

‘ But where's the passage to the skies?—  
The road through Death's black valley lies.  
Nay, do not shudder at my tale—  
tho' dark the shades, yet safe the vale.  
This path the best of men have trod;  
and who'd decline the road to God?  
Oh! 't is a glorious boon to die!  
this favour can't be priz'd too high.’

While thus she spake, my looks express'd  
the raptures kindling in my breast:

my soul a fix'd attention gave;  
when the stern monarch of the grave  
with haughty strides approach'd.—Amaz'd  
I stood, and trembled as I gaz'd.  
The seraph calm'd each anxious fear,  
and kindly wip'd the falling tear;  
then hasted with expanded wing  
to meet the pale terrific king.  
But now what milder scenes arise!  
the tyrant drops his hostile guise.  
He seems a youth divinely fair,  
in graceful ringlets waves his hair.  
His wings their whitening plumes display,  
his burnish'd plumes reflect the day.  
Light flows his shining azure vest,  
and all the angel stands confest.

I view'd the change with sweet surprise,  
and oh! I panted for the skies;  
thank'd Heaven that e'er I drew my breath,  
and triumph'd in the thoughts of death.





—♦—♦—♦—

## EPITAPHS.

—♦—

Reader, approach my urn—thou need'st not fear  
 th' extorted promise of one plaintive tear,  
 to mourn thy unknown friend—from me thou'lt learn  
 more than a Plato taught—the grand concern  
 of mortals!—wrapt in pensive thought, survey  
 this little freehold of unthinking clay,  
 and know thy end!  
 Tho' young, tho' gay, this scene of death explore,  
 alas! the young, the gay is now no more!

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### ON JOHN DUKE OF BRIDGWATER,

who died in the twenty-first year of his age, 1747-8.

Intent to hear, and bounteous to bestow,  
 a mind that melted at another's woe;  
 studious to act the self-approving part,  
 that midnight music of the honest heart!  
 Those silent joys th' illustrious youth possess'd,  
 those cloudless sunshines of the spotless breast;  
 from pride of peerage, and from folly free,  
 life's early morn, fair Virtue! gave to thee;  
 forbade the tear to steal from sorrow's eye,  
 bade anxious poverty forget to sigh;  
 like Titus, knew the value of a day,  
 and want went smiling from his gates away.

The rest were honours borrow'd from the throne  
 these honours, EGERTON, were all thy own!

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MISCELLANIES.

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THE FIRE-SIDE.

Dear Cloe! while the busy crowd,  
the vain, the wealthy, and the proud,  
in folly's maze advance;  
tho' singularity and pride  
be call'd our choice, we'll step aside,  
nor join the giddy dance.

From the gay world we'll oft retire  
to our own family and fire,  
where love our hours employs;  
no noisy neighbour enters here,  
no intermeddling stranger near,  
to spoil our heart-felt joys.

If solid happiness we prize,  
within our breast this jewel lies,  
and they are fools who roam;  
the world hath nothing to bestow,  
from our own selves our bliss must flow,  
and that dear hut our home.

Of rest was Noah's dove bereft,  
when with impatient wing she left  
that safe retreat, the ark;  
Giving her vain excursions o'er,  
the disappointed bird once more  
explor'd the sacred bark.

Tho' fools spurn Hymen's gentle powers,  
we, who improve his golden hours,

by sweet experience know,  
that marriage, rightly understood,  
gives to the tender and the good,  
a paradise below.

Our babes shall richest comforts bring;  
if tutor'd right they'll prove a spring  
whence pleasures ever rise:  
we'll form their minds with studious care  
to all that's manly, good, and fair,  
and train them for the skies.

While they our wisest hours engage,  
they'll joy our youth, support our age,  
and crown our hoary hairs;  
they'll grow in virtue every day,  
and they our fondest loves repay,  
and recompense our cares.

No borrow'd joys! they're all our own,  
while to the world we live unknown,  
or by the world forgot:  
monarchs! we envy not your state,  
we look with pity on the great,  
and bless our humble lot.

Our portion is not large, indeed,  
but then how little do we need,  
for nature's calls are few!  
In this the art of living lies,  
to want no more than may suffice,  
and make that little do.

We'll therefore relish with content,  
whate'er kind Providence has sent,  
nor aim beyond our power;  
for, if our stock be very small,


'tis prudence to enjoy it all,  
nor lose the present hour.

To be resign'd when ills betide,  
patient when favours are deny'd,  
and pleas'd with favours given;  
dear Cloe! this is wisdom's part,  
this is that incense of the heart,  
whose fragrance smells to heaven.

We'll ask no long-protracted treat,  
since winter-life is seldom sweet;  
but, when our feast is o'er,  
grateful from table we'll arise,  
nor grudge our sons, with envious eyes,  
the relics of our store.

Thus hand in hand through life we'll go;  
its checker'd paths of joy and woe  
with cautious steps we'll tread;  
quit its vain scenes without a tear,  
without a trouble, or a fear,  
and mingle with the dead.

While conscience, like a faithful friend,  
shall through the gloomy vale attend,  
and cheer our dying breath;  
shall, when all other comforts cease,  
like a kind angel, whisper peace,  
and smooth the bed of death.



TO A CHILD OF FIVE YEARS OLD.

Fairest flower! all flowers excelling,  
 which in Milton's page we see;  
 flowers of Eve's embower'd dwelling \*  
 are, my fair one, types of thee.

Mark, my Polly, how the roses  
 emulate thy damask cheek;  
 how the bud its sweets discloses—  
 buds thy opening bloom bespeak.

Lilies are by plain direction  
 emblems of a double kind;  
 emblems of thy fair complexion,  
 emblems of thy fairer mind.

But, dear girl! both flowers and beauty  
 blossom, fade, and die away;  
 then pursue good sense and duty,  
 evergreens! which ne'er decay.

TO-MORROW.

"Pereunt et imputantur."

'To-morrow, didst thou say!  
 methought I heard Horatio say, to-morrow.  
 Go to—I will not hear of it.—To-morrow!  
 't is a sharper, who stakes his penury  
 against thy plenty—who takes thy ready cash,  
 and pays thee nought but wishes, hopes & promises,  
 the currency of idiots. Injurious bankrupt,  
 that gulls the easy creditor!—To-morrow!

\* Alluding to Milton's description of Eve's bower.



is a period no where to be found  
all the hoary registers of time,  
less perchance in the fool's calendar.  
Wisdom disclaims the word, nor holds society  
with those who own it. No, my Horatio,  
Fancy's child, and Folly is its father;  
thought of such stuff as dreams are; and baseless  
the fantastic visions of the evening.  
But soft, my friend—arrest the present moments;  
be assur'd, they all are arrant tell-tales;  
tho' their flight be silent, and their path trackless  
the wing'd couriers of the air,  
thy post to heaven, and there record thy folly.  
Cause, tho' station'd on the important watch,  
thou, like a sleeping, faithless centinel,  
let them pass unnotic'd, unimprov'd.  
I know, for that thou slumber'dst on the guard,  
thou shalt be made to answer at the bar  
of every fugitive: and when thou thus  
standst impleaded at the high tribunal  
of Good-wink'd Justice, who shall tell thy audit?  
Then stay the present instant, dear Horatio;  
print the marks of wisdom on its wings.  
It is of more worth than kingdoms! far more precious  
than all the crimson treasures of life's fountain!—  
let it not elude thy grasp, but, like  
the good old patriarch upon record,  
let the fleet angel fast until he bless thee.



AN ILLUSION TO HORACE, ODE XVI.  
BOOK II.

Inscribed to H. W. Esq.

"Otium divos rogat in patenti  
prensus Ægæo, simul atra nubes  
condidit lunam, neque certa fulgent  
Sidera nautis," &c.

Say, heavenly Quiet! propitious nymph of light,  
why art thou thus conceal'd from human sight?  
tir'd of life's follies, fain I'd gain thy arms,  
oh! take me panting to thy peaceful charms;  
sooth my wild soul, in thy soft fetters caught,  
and calm the surges of tumultuous thought.

Thee, goddess, thee all states of life implore,  
the merchant seeks thee on the foreign shore:  
through frozen zones and burning isles he flies,  
and tempts the various horrors of the skies.

Nor frozen zones, nor burning isles controul  
that thirst of gain, that fever of the soul.

But mark the change—impending storms affright  
array'd in all the majesty of night—  
the raging winds, discharg'd their mystic caves,  
roar the dire signal to th' insulting waves.

The foaming legions charge the ribs of oak,  
and the pale fiend presents at every stroke.

To thee the unhappy wretch in pale despair  
bends the weak knee, and lifts the hand in prayer  
views the sad cheat, and swears he'll ne'er again  
range the hot clime, or trust the faithless main,  
or own so mean a thought, that thou art brib'd by

To thee the harness'd chief devotes his breath,  
and braves the thousand avenues of death;  
now red with fury seeks th' embattled plain,



rades floods of gore, and scales the hills of slain;  
now on the fort with winged vengeance falls,  
and tempts the sevenfold thunders of the walls.  
Mistaken man! the nymph of peace disdains  
the roar of cannons, and the smoke of plains:  
with milder incense let thy altars blaze,  
and in a softer note attempt her praise.  
What various herds attend the virgin's gate,  
subject in wealth, and impotent in state!  
A crowd of offerings on the altar lie,  
and idly strive to tempt her from the sky:  
but here the rich magnificence of kings  
are specious trifles all, and all unheeded things.  
No outward show celestial bosoms warms,  
the gaudy purple boasts inglorious charms;  
the gold here, conscious of its abject birth,  
only presumes to be superior earth.  
In vain the gem its sparkling tribute pays,  
and meanly tremulates in borrow'd rays.  
On these the nymph with scornful smiles looks down,  
nor e'er elects the favourite of a crown.  
Supremely great, she views us from afar,  
nor deigns to own a sultan or a czar.  
Did real happiness attend on state,  
how would I pant and labour to be great!  
to court I'd hasten with impetuous speed;  
but to be great's to be a wretch indeed.  
I speak of sacred truths; believe me, Hugh,  
the real wants of nature are but few.  
Poor are the charms of gold—a generous heart  
would blush to own a bliss, that these impart.  
Tis he alone the muse dares happy call,  
who with superior thought enjoys his little all.  
Within his breast no frantic passions roll.

soft are the motions of the virtuous soul.  
The night in silken slumbers glides away,  
and a sweet calm leads in the smiling day.

What antic notions form the human mind!  
perversely mad, and obstinately blind.  
Life in its large extent is scarce a span,  
yet, wondrous frenzy! great designs we plan,  
and shoot our thoughts beyond the date of man.

Man, that vain creature's but a wretched elf,  
and lives at constant enmity with self;  
swears to a southern climate he'll repair,  
but who can change the mind by changing air?  
Italia's plains may purify the blood,  
and with a nobler purple paint the flood;  
but can soft zephyrs aid th' ill-shapen thigh,  
or form to beauty the distorted eye?  
Can they with life inform the thoughtless clay?  
then a kind gale might waft my cares away.  
Where roves the muse?—'tis all a dream, my friend,  
all a wild thought—for Care, that ghastly fiend,  
that mighty prince of the infernal powers,  
haunts the still watches of the midnight hours.  
In vain the man the night's protection sought,  
Care stings like pois'nous asps to fury wrought,  
and wakes the mind to all the pains of thought.  
Not the wing'd ship, that sweeps the level main,  
not the young roe that bounds along the plain,  
are swift as Care—that monster leaves behind  
the aerial courser and the fleeter wind;  
through every clime performs a constant part,  
and sheathes its painful daggers in the heart.

Ah! why should man an idle game pursue,  
to future May-be's stretch the distant view?  
may more exalted thoughts our hours employ,

and wisely strive to taste the present joy !  
Life's an inconstant sea—the prudent ply  
With every oar to improve th' auspicious sky :  
But if black clouds the angry heav'ns deform,  
A cheerful mind will sweeten every storm.  
Though fools expect their joys to flow sincere,  
Yet none can boast eternal sunshine here.

The youthful chief, that like a summer flower  
Shines a whole life in one precarious hour,  
Impatient of restraint demands the fight,  
While painted triumphs swim before his sight.  
Forbear, brave youth, thy bold designs give o'er,  
For the next morn shall dawn, thou'lt be no more ;  
Envidious death shall blast thy opening bloom,  
Scarce blown, thou fad'st, scarce born, thou meet'st  
A tomb.

What though, my friend, the young are swept away,  
Untimely cropt in the proud blaze of day ;  
Yet when life's spring on purple wings is flown,  
And the brisk flood a noisome puddle grown ;  
When the dark eye shall roll its orb for light,  
And the roll'd orb confess impervious night ;  
When once untun'd the ear's contorted cell,  
The silver cords unbrace the sounding shell ;  
Thy sick'ning soul no more a joy shall find,  
Music no more shall stay thy lab'ring mind.  
The breathing canvas glows in vain for thee,  
In vain it blooms a gay eternity.  
With thee the statue's boasts of life are o'er,  
And Cæsar animates the brass no more.  
The flaming ruby, and the rich brocade,  
The sprightly ball, the mimic masquerade  
Now charm in vain—in vain the jovial god  
With blushing goblets plies the dormant clod.

Then why thus fond to draw superfluous breath,  
when every gasp protracts a painful death?  
age is a ghastly scene, cares, doubts and fears,  
one dull rough road of sighs, groans, pains and tears.

Let not ambitious views usurp thy soul,  
ambition, friend, ambition grasps the pole.  
The lustful eye on wealth's bright strand you fix,  
and sigh for grandeur and a coach and six;  
with golden stars you long to blend your fate,  
and with the garter'd lordling slide in state.  
An humbler theme my pensive hours employs  
(hear ye sweet heavens, and speed the distant joys!  
of these possess'd I'd scorn to court renown,  
or bless the happy coxcombs of the town).  
To me, ye gods, these only gifts impart,  
an easy fortune, and a cheerful heart;  
a little muse, and innocently gay,  
in sportive song to trifle cares away.  
Two wishes gain'd, love forms the last and best,  
and heaven's bright master-piece shall crown the rest.



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